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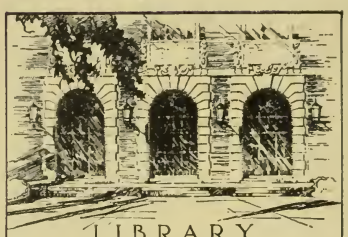

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THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

BY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1844.

1844
v. 3

THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

CHAPTER I.

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off or so.

BYRON.

COLONEL PAXWORTH was an intimate friend of Montague's. He was red, rough, and rude. He could affect good manners, and even imitate dandyism; but naturally he was blunt to a fault, and looked on physical courage as the standard by which all men were to be tried. Poets, statesmen, wits, orators, doctors, lawyers, and even parsons, he required to be brave men;

and would not admit that even the black coat of a clergyman should exempt him from the laws of honour, *i. e.* of duelling. Duelling, in his opinion, ought to have been much more frequently resorted to than it was at the period in question; and if he had had his will, the members of the legal profession would have perished for lack of clients. His appeal in nine cases out of ten would have been to the sword. He was tall, broad-shouldered, knew more of Yorkshire than he did of China, and could eat, drink, fight, fence, and, if necessary, bluster, with any man of his standing.

No sooner had Montague explained to his pugnacious friend the whole of the affair relating to the letter, than Colonel Paxworth exclaimed, "This is a matter of life and death,—no common affair of honour this. Nonpareil or yourself must fall."

"Unless he should recall his words and apologise," said Montague.

"Oh! he cannot do that," replied the colonel; "and I do not know that even an apology should satisfy you. It is the most unexampled act of treachery and cowardice I ever heard of, and you can show no quarter. A Frenchman would make this a case for blunderbusses, and fire across a table; and he would be right. You

must have ample satisfaction for this rascally act, Montague, and you may rely on *my* firmness."

"Nonpareil may have been led into this by others. He may have been deceived. Though the letter is so like his handwriting as to make one feel there can be no doubt on the subject, still it is just possible he did not write it," replied Montague; "and I should be rejoiced to find out that I was mistaken."

"Montague," said the colonel, with much of severity and harshness, "am I to be made a cat's-paw of in a sham duel—firing in the air—half apologies accepted,—and a character for bravery obtained at little risk, or indeed without any danger? or do you wish me to accompany you to obtain signal vengeance or most ample satisfaction? In the one case, I decline the post of second: it would be unworthy of you, and would disgrace me. If, on the contrary, you are resolved to obtain reparation from Nonpareil, or take that vengeance which such unexampled cowardice and villany on his part entitle you to do, I am your man. You may count on me. As to his handwriting, I entertain no doubt on that head. You asked Swainton his opinion, and he said it was Nonpareil's. Swainton asked you, and you said the

same. We must assume it to be his. If he denies it, we must hear the opinions of other friends, and surprise Lady Muchberry out of her testimony. The truth must be discovered; and it shall be, if left to me to arrange. He must either acknowledge or deny it. If he acknowledges it, he must answer for his conduct; if he denies it, we must satisfy ourselves that the denial is true."

"I should not have come to you, of all men in the world, my dear Paxworth," replied Montague, "if I had any desire to fight a sham duel, or to gain a character for courage at small risk, and without any real danger; but, on the other hand, I have much at heart to afford Nonpareil the opportunity of asserting and proving himself innocent, if possible; and, next to this, of clearing my character in the opinion of the Clappertons. It is not the life of Nonpariel I desire, but a solemn and deliberate recantation on his part, which shall satisfy Sir Edward, and render his sister Sophia yet more attached to my person; because, assured as to the uprightness of my intentions and character, I do not desire to fight a duel for the pleasure of wounding my adversary, or of being wounded myself; but I seek this means of reparation as the only one adapted to this description of injuries."

"In plain terms, Montague," said Paxworth, "the duel is the *dernier ressort;* but if you resort to it, it will be a duel in right earnest."

"Most assuredly," replied Montague; "I will not leave Bath without either such a written apology and explanation as shall fully satisfy Sir Edward and his sister or without a duel *à l'outrance.*"

"Good," said the colonel; "I accept the office of second on these conditions. Now let us start as quickly as possible."

The colonel offered to lend Montague his very best pistols; and half an hour afterwards they were on their road to Bath.

In the course of the journey, various plans were discussed for ascertaining from Nonpareil's own friends their opinions relative to the handwriting of the letter; but at last it was agreed that the colonel, who was an old acquaintance of Lady Muchberry's and of Lord Lyttenworth's, should see each of them separately; should learn from each what they thought on the subject; and all testimonies concurring in pronouncing Nonpareil to be the writer, should then proceed to his lordship, require him to declare whether he was so or not, and of course to act accordingly. They reached Bath at an early hour in the morning; and, having obtain-

ed some rest and refreshment, the colonel proceeded to call on Lord Lyttenworth. He was breakfasting when Colonel Paxworth's name was announced, but was immediately ushered in.

"My dear Paxworth," said Lord Lyttenworth, "what in the world can have brought you to Bath? Why, I should as soon have thought of seeing the whole of the planets, and the moon into the bargain, walk in at the door. I thought you were at Newmarket. Still I am delighted to see you."

"I am as surprised to find myself here, my lord," replied the colonel, "as you can possibly be to see me; but I have a bet with a friend of mine, which I think I shall win. I have a wager, then, that I will find out this handwriting," showing to his lordship at the same time a few words of the anonymous letter addressed to Miss Sophia.

"You will win your wager easily," replied his lordship: "there can be no more doubt whose handwriting it is, than there can be that this is an egg shell."

"It is Nonpareil's, isn't it?" asked Paxworth.

"To be sure it is," replied Lord Lyttenworth. "Here," throwing down a note he had

received a few day previously from Lord Nonpareil in a feigned hand, written with the intention of hoaxing him, "is a letter I had from him, in which he thought he had so concealed his handwriting as to evade the possibility of detection; but the shape of his letters is so peculiar that he could not deceive me. I played him off a famous trick in revenge, for I sent him a small hamper of young rats. Oh, yes! this is Nonpareil's writing. Some stupid joke or other I suppose. What a pity it is that he should make such a fool of himself! He is labouring on all fours just now to ingratiate himself with some decent sort of city people who are here—very rich, and great friends of Montague's. If Montague does not take care, Nonpareil, I am told, will cut him out. At least so it is said, and I know Lady Muchberry is of that opinion."

"Indeed!" said the colonel; "I must call on Lady Muchberry to ask her how she does, though I have but a few hours to remain here. Will you give me her address?"

"Certainly," replied Lord Lyttenworth, "she resides at ——, and you will find her in a very good humour, I suspect, to-day, for she was fortunate last night at play, and could not have won less than from thirty-five to forty sove-

reigns. But what turns upon this letter of Nonpareil's. May I read it?"

"Not at this moment," said the colonel, "for I am not yet free to allow any one to read it; but you shall do so before I leave Bath to-morrow morning, if you will be in the way."

The colonel took a hasty leave of his lordship, and, without returning to Montague, proceeded to Lady Muchberry's.

"Well, colonel!" exclaimed her ladyship as he entered her boudoir, "have you fallen from the sun, the moon, or from heaven direct? or is the world come to an end? You at *Bath*, — this is surprising! I hope to stop?"

"A few hours, my lady, and no more; but I could not visit this charming city for even a few hours without inquiring after your health."

The conversation then turned on a variety of subjects: Bath, the health of the king, Lord Swainton, his late good fortune, &c., Sir Felix Montague, who the colonel acknowledged was with him; and then Colonel Paxworth made signs of leaving.

"By the by, Lady Muchberry," said the colonel, as he rose from his chair and was proceeding towards the door of the boudoir, "do you know Lord Lyttenworth's handwriting?"

"To be sure I do," replied her ladyship, "as well as I do my own."

"And do you know Lord Nonpareil's manner of writing as well?" asked the colonel with affected indifference.

"Why you know I do, colonel," replied her ladyship, "though there is no very great resemblance between them."

"I think not either," said the colonel; "but I have a bet to win or to lose, and I should like to have your opinion. I cannot show you all the letter at this moment, for it is quite a private one; but, I believe, I shall be able to do so to-morrow. I can show you a line or so, and you will tell me who wrote it."

The colonel then placed the letter in her ladyship's hand, with just one line visible.

"Why, colonel, how could you be so silly as to ask me whether this is Lyttenworth's writing?" asked Lady Muchberry. "It is Nonpareil's of course — as clear as chrystal — or as your eye-glass."

"I think so too," replied the colonel.

"Think so, do you say?" inquired her ladyship; "I am sure so!"

Lady Muchberry did all she could to obtain the colonel's permission to read the whole of the letter; but he assured her that he could

not, without violating his honour, suffer anyone to inspect its contents before the next day.

"Mind you show it me to-morrow," said her ladyship as he left the room. "I 'd bet a five-pound note he has been making a fool of himself."

Lady Muchberry sadly wanted to know why Sir Felix was at Bath, when he had but just left it; but the colonel said it was an affair of business which had called him there for a few hours also, and therefore they travelled together. The colonel assured her that the letter business was also wholly a private affair and a private wager; but that still he had no doubt of procuring the consent of the person who entrusted him with it, to show it to her the next day. He enjoined Lady Muchberry to secrecy as to Montague's arrival.

Thus fortified with the united opinions of Lords Swainton and Lyttenworth, Lady Muchberry and Montague, Colonel Paxworth proceeded to the house of Lord Nonpareil. He was closing the street-door after him as the colonel stepped up to the house.

"Lord Nonpareil, I believe?" said the colonel.

"I think I may say Colonel Paxworth," re-

plied his lordship; "of whom I have often heard, but whom I have not seen for many years past."

"The same," said the colonel. "We have met at Lady Muchberry's several years ago, and exchanged some letters respecting Major Down."

"Oh! I remember perfectly," replied his lordship. "To what am I indebted for a call from Colonel Paxworth?" at the same time knocking at the door that he might invite the colonel to walk in.

"To a very unpleasant circumstance," replied the colonel; "if you will allow me we will say no more till we have entered."

The street-door was opened, and Lord Nonpareil and the colonel entered the drawing-room.

"I have no fire here," said his lordship; "will you allow me to order one?"

"There is no occasion, I assure you," replied the colonel; "my business will not take up three minutes. I am a friend of the Honourable Felix Montague, whom you know."

"Oh, remarkably well," said Lord Nonpareil, "and a fine pleasant fellow he is. He has been here lately, and has just returned to London with Lord Swainton."

"Precisely so," replied the colonel; "and it is in connection with a circumstance bearing upon his visit to Bath, that I have called on you. You are acquainted with Sir Edward Clapperton and his family, I believe?"

"Yes; I have the honour of their acquaintance," said his lordship.

"Miss Sophia Clapperton received some time since a letter from your lordship."

"From *me?*" asked Lord Nonpareil, colouring amazingly when he asked the question. "From *me*, Colonel Paxworth? Who says she received a letter from *me?* I am sure she will not say so. I saw her yesterday, and not a word transpired to that effect. Who says I ever wrote to her?"

"I say so," replied the colonel; "and Lord Swainton says so; and Montague says so; and Lord Lyttenworth says so; and Lady Muchberry says so; and when I show you the letter, which is this," holding the letter open in his hand, "you will say so too. Is not this letter in your handwriting, my lord?"

"How came you, colonel, in possession of that letter? and who has authorized you to ask me for this explanation?"

The colonel took out of his pocket-book a letter from the Honourable Felix Montague, conceived in these terms:—

" Dear Nonpareil,

" —For notwithstanding certain most painful suspicions, I will still call you so, until it shall be proved to my mind that I have estimated your character incorrectly,—I have requested my old and tried friend Colonel Paxworth, to call on you for some explanations relative to an anonymous letter addressed by you to Miss Sophia Clapperton, and which, in spite of the pains taken to disguise the handwriting, is attributed by all to you. I trust most sincerely that this may prove not to be the case, and that I may still continue to be,

" Yours truly,

" F. Montague."

Lord Nonpareil read the letter, and remained silent for at least two minutes.

" What am I to say to Montague?" asked the colonel.

" That I neither admit nor deny the anonymous letter," replied Lord Nonpareil; " and that I require to know what reasons he has for charging me with being its author?"

" The best of all reasons," said the colonel; " that those who are most intimately acquainted with your lordship declare it to be your handwriting. I have just seen Lord Lyttenworth, and Lady Muchberry; and without communi-

cating to either of them the substance of the letter, but only allowing them to see one line of it, they both instantly declared that it was your writing. I saw also a letter to Lord Lyttenworth, in which you played off a hoax on him lately; and that handwriting and this likewise corresponded."

His lordship changed colour, and from fierce red he turned to deadly white.

"And if I did write the letter," asked his lordship, "what then?"

"Why then you would be a scoundrel," replied the colonel.

"And what then?" asked his lordship.

"You must write a recantation of all you have falsely and cruelly urged against Sir Felix Montague; you must send a copy of that recantation and apology to Miss Sophia Clapperton, and another to Sir Edward Clapperton; and you must address a letter to Montague himself, expressing your deep regret at having acted so basely and treacherously towards one whom you professed to call your friend, which letter he shall have the right of showing to whom he may think fit, and when he shall deem necessary: or——"

"I know your alternative," replied Lord Nonpareil, "and I greatly prefer it. It is not

worth while to go into all the circumstances which led me to write that letter. I was justified in what I did; but if Montague demands satisfaction, he shall have it. Let me know your address at Bath, and my friend, Major Wrightson, shall call on you, and settle all the preliminaries."

"Within two hours," said the colonel; "I will wait for him."

The colonel returned to the inn. Montague was furious at the refusal of Lord Nonpareil to write the required letters of apology. He had hoped that the affair would have been terminated by such a decision; for he well knew that by far the better mode of removing any imputation against his character would have been to produce to the Clappertons a letter from Lord Nonpareil, rather than a certificate from seconds at a duel that he had fought with spirit and courage.

"These city people would have understood a letter much better than a duel," observed Montague. "They will be sure to ask why Nonpareil persevered in his statement, and preferred rather to risk his life than to retract his calumnies. The duel must be fought, and shall be fought; but it will not, I fear, remove any bad impression, if a bad one has already

been made, on Sir Edward's mind. As to Nonpareil, he is too great a scoundrel to live. He professes to be my friend; he hears of my chances of a successful and happy matrimonial engagement; he seeks by anonymous accusations to ruin my prospects; he is found out; he declares that he was justified in what he did; and, rather than acknowledge his crime, and seek to repair the injury he may have inflicted on me, he actually prefers to seek to take away my life. I am convinced he will fire his very best; and should he succeed in seriously wounding me, he will persist in his calumnies, and even perhaps seek to gain Sophia himself, — murdering his friend after having libelled him. Yes, Paxworth, you are right: this is an affair of life and death, and it shall be so. Perhaps he may yet repent; perhaps he may, even at the last moment, offer an apology: but it must be a strong one, indeed, now, for me to accept it."

They had scarcely finished their conversation than Major Wrightson entered the room. Montague withdrew into an adjoining chamber and left the colonel and the major alone.

"I have been requested, colonel," said the major, who was a tall, elegant, well-bred man, "to wait on you respecting an affair of ho-

nour between Lord Nonpareil and Sir Felix Montague. His lordship has explained to me all that has transpired, and has justified his conduct to me in writing that letter, by putting me in possession of some circumstances connected with a Mrs. Wantage, who was a friend of his lordship's, and to whom your friend had behaved exceedingly ill. However, be this as it may, neither party seems inclined to apologize. You have demanded satisfaction for your friend; Lord Nonpareil is willing to give it; and, if you have no objection, the affair can take place at daybreak in some meadows near Newton St. Loe.

The colonel requested permission to communicate to Montague the general and vague charges brought against him by Lord Nonpareil, through his second, of having acted improperly towards a Mrs. Wantage.

"He is the chief of scoundrels," replied Montague. "Two years have elapsed since that charge was gone into and refuted. Nonpareil declared that he was fully convinced that the letters Mrs. Wantage had received were not,—as indeed they were not,—my productions, and that I was no party thereto; and yet two years afterwards he dares to fly in the face of this declaration, and to say that he acted as he has done with

reference to myself, because I behaved ill to Mrs. Wantage. There is nothing to be done with such a fellow as that, but to rid the world of him. I would not accept an apology now, even if it were offered."

Colonel Paxworth communicated to Major Wrightson all that had passed in the next room, and the seconds arranged that the weapons should be pistols, that the distance should be twenty paces, and that the hour of meeting should be daybreak.

At seven the next morning Sir Felix Montague, accompanied by Colonel Paxworth, and followed by a medical man who remained at a cottage not far removed, proceeded to the ground. Already Lord Nonpareil and Major Wrightson had arrived, also accompanied by a surgeon.

The ground was measured; the parties placed; the signal given; — and both parties fell. The ball of Sir Felix had entered the left side of Lord Nonpareil. The ball of Lord Nonpareil had wounded the chest of Montague. The medical men advanced; and both pronounced the two cases to be very serious. Sir Felix was removed back to the inn. A consultation took place. The ball was believed to have entered, though, evidently, it had not gone

through, but had, perhaps, lodged in the body. Fainting and great depression came on rapidly, with loss of blood; and the despatches sent off to Lord Swainton were of the most gloomy character.

Lady Muchberry, during the previous day, had in vain sought to learn from Lord Nonpareil the secret of "this letter affair." He had declared that it had something to do with their former dispute respecting Mrs. Wantage, but that it would all terminate satisfactorily.

"Have you heard that Sir Felix Montague is here, Miss Sophia?" asked Lady Muchberry, the preceding afternoon, when she called on her, an hour or two after she had received the visit of Colonel Paxworth.

"Oh, that is impossible!" replied Sophia. "We heard, not *from* him, indeed, but *of* him, only an hour or two ago; and yesterday he was in London in good health."

"And to-day he is at Bath, in the same good health: that I can vouch for."

"Have you seen him, then?" asked Sophia, with evident emotion.

"No, I have not," replied her ladyship; "but Colonel Paxworth, who accompanied him hither, called on me an hour ago, and he had only just left him at the hotel.

"How curious!" said Sophia.

"Well, that is strange!" observed Charlotte.

"I never heard anything so odd in my life!" remarked Lucy.

"I was as much surprised as you are," replied her ladyship. "The colonel told me that Sir Felix had come for a few hours on particular business; and, as to the colonel, he has some cock-and-a-bull story in his head about a letter, the handwriting of which he wanted to find out, to decide a wager. He has always some mad prank in his head or other. Beggars description! as Lord Swainton says. He has promised to come to-morrow, and tell me all about it."

Sophia changed colour, but she concealed it by coughing and holding her handkerchief to her face. Why it was, or how it was, she could not tell, but so it was, that she felt a sort of conviction, the moment the words "letter" and "handwriting" reached her ear, especially as connected with Sir Felix being at Bath, that he had come down to examine into the affair of the anonymous communication she had received, prior to the Warnstable election.

"Who is Colonel Paxworth?" asked Sophia of Lady Muchberry.

"Oh, the greatest duellist in the universe,"

replied her ladyship; "a perfect gentleman,—a man of the nicest sense of honour,—a great friend of Sir Felix Montague's,—but not a very pleasant companion. When he is courteous, he is so odd with it, that his politeness resembles one who is acting, rather than feeling, civil."

"A duellist!" exclaimed Sophia: "a monster then,—a duellist by profession is a monster! I wonder why Sir Felix should associate with him?"

"Oh, he is not always fighting," replied her ladyship; "I beg you will not misunderstand me. He is a thorough man of honour, and of excellent family."

During the whole of that evening nothing was talked of by the Miss Clappertons and Lucy but the extraordinary and secret visit of Sir Felix to Bath; and every time the dining or drawing-room doors opened they expected to see him enter. So confident were they that at least he would call, that they sat up till past midnight, and then retired to rest more surprised and even anxious than before.

As to Sophia, she did not close her eyes that night. She could not get rid of the notion that this letter of which Lady Muchberry spoke, was the very identical anonymous letter which

she had received. And yet her brother had appeared to make light of it, and had declared he believed Montague to be highly respectable; but, certainly, he had added, that it would be time enough to make further inquiries when Sir Felix should make any offer of marriage. "Depend upon it," she said to herself, "Edward has shown the letter; Sir Felix has at once come to Bath to find out the writer, and, I fear, to fight a duel with him." And then she imagined all sorts of horrors; so that the moment she attempted to sleep, she started in her bed, alarmed and horrified.

During the hour of breakfast the next morning the conversation turned to the same subject.

"I dare say he is back in London by this time," said Lucy; "rely on it, if he had had one minute in which to have reached you, he would have found his way."

"Oh, I am sure of that," replied Sophia; "but I fear something else. I fear he has been here either as principal or as second to fight a duel."

Charlotte said not a word. She had had her suspicions; but she loved Sophia too well to express them.

About two o'clock a note came from Lady Muchberry. It was addressed to Miss Lucy

Dawson, and begged of her, as a great favour, to call on her as soon as possible, having something to communicate to her of great importance. Lucy blushed. She forgot the colonel, and Sir Felix, and every one else, and imagined that it was something or other she had to learn respecting Captain Macfarlane, or the decision of her own father, Colonel Dawson, from whom she was daily expecting a letter relative to the proposal of the captain to herself. The carriage was ordered; the lady's-maid accompanied Miss Dawson in the carriage, and remained in it at the door.

"My dear Miss Dawson," said Lady Muchberry, as pretty Lucy entered, "I am overwhelmed with grief. I thought of coming down to Milsom Street to see you; but I did not dare to do so. Sir Felix Montague has fought a duel this morning with Lord Nonpareil; both are wounded, and, I fear, Sir Felix, fatally."

"Fatally!" exclaimed poor Lucy in a state of horror. "Fatally, do you say? And Lord Nonpareil too? Why, what is to be done? I cannot tell Sophia. Charlotte will be distracted—but Sophia——"

And then poor Lucy sobbed with no affected grief.

"What was the cause of the duel?" asked Lucy, still weeping.

"A wicked letter that Nonpareil wrote to Miss Sophia," replied her ladyship. "Come what may, I have done with him for ever. But he is not mortally wounded they tell me, though very seriously."

"A letter Lord Nonpareil sent to Sophia?" asked Lucy in a tone of affectionate curiosity or rather anxiety; "what can it be?"

"No: it was an anonymous letter," replied Lady Muchberry; "and Lord Nonpareil was silly enough to write it."

"I have heard of this letter before," said Lucy; "but what am I to do about Sir Felix? If I were to withhold the intelligence from Sophia of his being dangerously wounded, she would never forgive me. What am I to do?"

Lady Muchberry advised that she should tell Charlotte alone all the circumstances, and leave her to break them to her sister. She thought, also, that Lucy might send to make inquiries at "the York," where Sir Felix lay attended by four medical men.

She drove to the hotel; saw the mistress of the establishment; inquired the state of Sir Felix; learnt that it was most alarming; and then proceeded to Milsom Street. She took

the precaution, however, of not driving to the door, gave a single knock, sent a servant to Miss Charlotte to call her out of the room "to a poor woman who wished to speak to her," and then communicated to her friend the melancholy news.

"Dear Sophia will never recover it!" exclaimed Charlotte; "my poor sister will die! it will drive her mad! I know not how I shall tell her. Our days of joy are indeed changed for those of mourning!"

"While there is life there is hope," said Lucy: "there is still hope."

Sophia was frantic, or very nearly so. She declared she would go to the York, and nurse him herself; and it required all the moral and sisterly authority which Charlotte exercised over her mind to prevent her from doing so. It was at once resolved that the medical man whom their brother had called in to see Lucy about the pain in her side should be sent for, and requested to see the professional men attending Sir Felix, and learn from them the exact state of the case. It was further determined that two of their servants should remain at the York, and bring them intelligence every half hour.

The medical man arrived at Milsom Street,

proceeded to the York House, and soon returned with the intelligence that an operation was about to be performed with the view of ascertaining whether the ball had really entered, or had only fractured a portion of the chest-bone, and been repelled by its strength, still pushing some portion of the fractured bone internally. Miss Charlotte requested him to return, and watch the operation. He did so. He was absent more than an hour. Sophia was distracted; Charlotte and Lucy could not pacify her. She vowed if Sir Felix died, she would avenge his death on Lord Nonpareil. At length the medical man returned, and pronounced Sir Felix out of danger.

"Thank God!" cried Charlotte, and she burst open the door to rush to Sophia.

The chest-bone had been fractured, but the ball had not entered. It had been since found in the field at Newton St. Loe.

Sophia was seized with hysterical affections; but these subsided as the half hour's bulletins became increasingly favourable. All pain, sickness, and fainting ceased; Sir Felix obtained some refreshing sleep, and the next morning was able to write,—

"Dearest and best beloved as well as kind-

est of all created beings, I shall be well shortly. I have heard all. Mr. S—— has related to me all that has passed. May every happiness be yours, as also your sister's, and Miss Lucy's.

"For ever yours,

"F. MONTAGUE."

Hour after hour bulletins more and more satisfactory arrived at Milsom Street; and in three days Sir Felix, having received from Sir Edward Clapperton the kindest of letters congratulating him on his recovery, and consenting to his eventual marriage with Sophia, was able to reach the drawing-room of the ladies, and to return, *in propriâ persona*, his thanks for such unexampled attention, kindness, and friendship, as they had all evinced As, however, from rapid depletion he was exceedingly weak, and was interdicted by his medical men from remaining out after five in the evening, he paid but two visits before the return of Sir Edward to Bath; and his communications with the fair and kind inhabitants of the mansion in Milsom Street were confined to grateful and affectionate billets-doux, which all read with pleasure, but which Sophia devoured with delight. As to Lord Nonpareil, he left Bath, —

for he was ashamed to show his face,—gave directions to let his house for the rest of the season,—proceeded to Brussels, and was not heard of for more than twelve months afterwards. His name became at Bath a byword for treachery and calumny. It is now time to return to Sir Edward Clapperton and the House of Commons; but this must be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Our country's welfare is our first concern,
And who promotes that best, best proves his duty.
POPE.

SIR EDWARD CLAPPERTON, notwithstanding his acquaintance with some of the city members, and with the Marquis of Charmouth and Colonel Bell, found his position in the House of Commons both isolated and disagreeable. The marquis and the colonel attended only occasionally; those of the city members, whom he knew as city men, were liberals, and looked on him with somewhat of suspicion. True, his father had not been a party man, and young Sir Edward had never distinguished himself in contested elections as the active and zealous supporter of any faction; but it was thought in the city that he leant more to the Whig than the Tory side, and that should he ever become an M.P., he would support what were called "liberal principles." The fact was that, as

Sir Edward Clapperton belonged to trade, it was presumed his tendencies were democratical, just as it is always imagined that a landed proprietor must and will be an aristocrat. Sir Edward found, therefore, that, though the city members, when they saw him, occasionally exchanged a nod of recognition, they stood aloof from him, and he was left alone. He beheld other men chatting away the whole sitting, paying not the smallest attention to the subjects under discussion, except when Colonel S——, or Sir Henry —— uttered their loud cries of "Hear!" and then that they were only momentarily aroused from their varied private conversations to pay an instant's attention to the point at issue. Although he had on various occasions witnessed from the gallery of the House of Commons the odd spectacle of some hundreds of legislators with their hats on, some talking, some standing, some sleeping, some yawning, some reading, some snoring, some taking notes, some laughing, some shouting, some drawing caricatures, some stretched at full length along the benches, and others setting astride, some standing behind the speaker's chair, some looking at books and papers at the table, some quizzing the member who was addressing the House, whose attention he in vain

sought to secure, and some talking so loud about the bar, that the speaker was ever and anon compelled to cry "Order—order—below the bar!" still he did not fully realise the extreme oddity of the scene until, as now, he found himself one of their number. His first sensation on entering the House during the second, third, and fourth days, was that of fear. He took off his hat, as a matter of course, reached quietly his seat, and noted well all the proceedings. He tried to understand the course of business; but it was all a mystery. He observed that Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, were equally inattentive to petitions; that petitioning was the veriest farce in the world; and that none are more deceived than those who imagine that because they place their petitions in the hands of some popular members, therefore that they will receive more attention either from the House or the speaker. He was amused with the rapidity with which the speaker despatched all petitions.

"That the petition be now read," said the speaker: "as many as are of that opinion say Aye; the contrary, say No: the Ayes have it." And then the clerk read six words, and no more.

"That the petition do lie upon the table,"

continued the speaker: "as many as are of that opinion say Aye; the contrary, say No: the Ayes have it."

And then sometimes, when the member presenting the petition asked that it should be printed,

"That the petition be *printed:* as many as are of that opinion say Aye; the contrary, say No: the Ayes have it." And then, without waiting to take breath, the speaker called on the next member, whose name was inscribed on the list, who appeared on the scene only to be despatched with similar rapidity; no one in the whole House understanding one word of what had passed except the clerk, who read three words from the title, and three more from the prayer of the petition.

"Petitioning is a farce indeed!" thought Sir Edward. "What an odd system is the one called parliamentary. I can understand an absolute monarchy or a republic; but this parliamentary system, where those who elect are wholly disregarded from the moment the elections are over, does indeed beggar description."

On the fifth day of attending the House, Sir Edward received from one of the messengers a note written in pencil by a lawyer of Warn-

stable, requesting him to step into the lobby. Sir Edward blushed, rose up, put on his hat, and was proceeding to the door, when he heard loud cries of "Order!" He turned round. All eyes were directed towards him. What could be the matter? He was greatly agitated. Some one approached him as the cries of order redoubled, and informed him that he had his hat on. "And so has everyone else," said Sir Edward. "Yes, when they are sitting down," replied his kind-hearted informant; "but you are standing up." Sir Edward took off his hat, and a loud shout of "Ah!" succeeded. Mr. Oasis Millet was one of the loudest in his clamour, and added a laugh to his cry of "ah!" The Whigs at that time were out of office, and sometimes annoyed young Tory members by their railleries or bawlings. Poor Sir Edward hardly knew how he reached the door, and when he did so, looked as red as a turkey-cock.

"How do you do, Sir Edward Clapperton?" asked lawyer Smart, who had been employed professionally to get an Inclosure Bill through the House, and to which some unexpected opposition had arisen; "I hope you are quite well."

"Most happy to see you, Mr. Smart," re-

plied Sir Edward; "how are all our friends at Warnstable?"

"Quite well, I thank you, Sir Edward. I have a favour to request of you. I have no doubt you will grant it."

"I am sure I shall be most happy to oblige you in anything," said Sir Edward. "Pray what is it?"

"It is to present this petition in favour of an Inclosure Bill of some lands near Warnstable, and to do so this evening; and then to take charge of the bill, for Sir George Binkton, one of our county members, is ill, and the other one is to oppose the bill on behalf of Lord Calcerton, whose property is great in the neighbourhood, and who objects to the inclosure in question."

"I will do my best," replied Sir Edward; "but you know I am but young in the House at present. However, give me the petition, and you and I will have a talk to-morrow at my hotel over the merits of the bill, and the best course to adopt. Will you breakfast with me at ten? What is the object of this petition?"

"It is a petition, Sir Edward," said lawyer Smart, "in favour of the Inclosure Bill. It is a private petition for a private bill, and will be duly examined before the committee to whom

the bill is referred. I will breakfast with you to-morrow with great pleasure."

So Sir Edward and the lawyer parted, and the former returned to the House. He took care to take off his hat this time, and made his way towards the seat of Alderman Tin, one of the city members.

"What am I to do with this petition?" asked Sir Edward of the alderman.

The alderman was a good-tempered man, and explained to him minutely all the forms to go through. He wrote down his name at the table, kept his hat in his hand most religiously, regained his own seat, and waited till his turn should come.

"Sir Edward Clapperton!" cried the speaker, about half an hour after the honourable member had inscribed his name as having a petition to present. Before his name was called Sir Edward felt bold as a lion; but on hearing his name for the first time before four hundred legislators, all assembled on occasion of an important debate, his heart sank within him. He rose hastily, coloured tremendously, kept on his hat in his agitation, and was assailed with deafening cries of "Order!" He instantly remembered his mistake, and removed his hat; but his confusion was most painful. What he

said he never could remember; but all he recollected was, that as he went down the steps to the floor of the House, to carry the petition to the table to give to the clerk, his foot slipped and he nearly fell down. The blood once more rushed to his head, and when he regained his seat he was nearly purple. The speaker called out his name again.

"Sir Edward Clapperton."

Sir Edward rose this time without his hat, and the speaker looked at him.

"You must move something," said the member who sat next him, and who pitied his embarrassment.

"I don't know what to move," said Sir Edward.

"What is the petition?" asked his neighbour.

"In favour of an Inclosure Bill," replied Sir Edward.

"Oh! then move that it be referred to the committee on the bill."

Sir Edward did so, and the speaker said,

"That the petition be referred to the committee on the bill, — as many as are of that opinion say Aye, — the contrary say No; the Ayes have it."

The speaker bowed. Sir Edward sat down,

and at that moment he remembers to have distinctly and ardently desired two things: first, that he had never become a member; and, secondly, that at that moment he had been drowned, and at the bottom of the sea.

Soon after Sir Edward left the House, and returned to his hotel.

"Horrible place that House of Commons!" said Sir Edward, as he entered the quiet apartments of his friend Captain Macfarlane, to partake with two or three of the captain's friends of a piece of fish, a tender steak, and an admirable bottle of old crusted port. "No one to speak to! Lots of dumb show! Noise, heat, forms and ceremonies, insolent looks, bearish and boorish manners, and nothing to amuse or recreate. I'm afraid I shall be put down amongst the idle and absent members,—for the impression is anything but favourable. How different the House looks to a spectator, and to an actor."

"I suspect this is the case with nearly everything in this world," replied the captain; "the cottage on the distant hill, on which the sun shines brightly, looks beautiful and picturesque from the distance; but examine it closely, and it is dirty, uninteresting, and commonplace. The ship, whose sails look so white and

dazzling is a mere collier vessel; and when you arrive on board, tar, pitch, small cabins and bad smells, annoy and disgust you. The Debating Club, the speeches of whose members read so well in a radical journal, is a noisy, vulgar, plebeian forum when you enter within its walls: and thus it is with the House of Commons. The reporters present you in the daily prints with speeches which the members often scarcely recognise for their own heavy, stupid, disjointed observations. Many a wife is startled when she reads in print the eloquence of her husband; and many a maiden wishes her lover would be as impassioned in his conversations or letters as he is in his reported orations. Mr. Perry, formerly of the Morning Chronicle, once declared, that if reporters were to take down verbatim, and publish in the same form, the speeches of even tolerably able men, the public would be so disgusted with the verbiage, tautology, and even nonsense of those orations, that in less than a week no one would take in a newspaper which contained them. He added that, except on great occasions, when the chief orators rose, and when *Gala nights* took place, there were never two decent speeches in any evening, and that more talent, wit, and even grammar and

grammatical speaking, might be found in a boy's club at a boarding school than in the House of Commons."

"I had to present a petition to-day," said Sir Edward, "in favour of an Inclosure bill, and a more rude, ungentlemanly, uncooth reception I never met with at a country fair; nor even, I am persuaded, should I experience such at an Irish wake. It was known that I was a new member, and therefore unused to the forms of the house; but Oasis Millet, and some of his Whig men, set up such a shouting and yelling, because I stood up for a second or two with my hat on, that you would have imagined I had been killing their wives or children."

"Oh, they would not have cried so loud then," observed Mr. Morgan, a Cambridge man, who was no lover of the parliamentary system, and sighed for reform or a republic;— "they are by no means anxious respecting either wives or children, and would look with more complacency on an adroit highwayman than on a new member, who had just taken his seat on the opposite side of the House to themselves. In private society most of these men are gentlemen, but the instant they get into the House they become political partisans; and then all other feelings and points of character

are merged in their political considerations or interests."

"The Tories appear to me always," said Sir Edward, "the best-mannered men in the House, but this may arise from their being in power, and therefore able to afford to be civil. Whereas the Whigs are so soured from being so long excluded from the sweets of office, that they vent their spite and their bile on their political antagonists without rhyme or reason.

"As for the Whigs," replied Mr. Morgan, "I have no patience with them. They are Tories when out of office, lest they should be suspected of being Reformers; and are much more anxious to keep in with the Tory government, than they are of pressing upon that government reform principles. I presume you know the origin of the term Whig?"

"Indeed I do not," replied Sir Edward; "but believe it is of Scotch origin."

"It is so," said Mr. Morgan. "The south-west counties of Scotland had formerly seldom corn enough to serve them round the year, and the northern parts, producing more than they needed, those in the west went in the summer to buy at Leith the stores that came from the north; and from a word *wiggham*, used in driving their horses, all that drove were called

the *Wiggamors;* and, for shortness, the Whigs. Now at the time when the news arrived in Scotland of the defeat of the Duke of Hamilton, the Scotch Presbyterian ministers animated the people to rise, and march to Edinburgh. They reached the capital at the head of the people of their respective parishes in a state of unheard-of fury. The Marquis of Argyle and his party headed them, they being about six thousand. This was called the *Whiggamors'* inroad; and ever after that, all who opposed the court were, out of contempt, called *Whigs.* From Scotland the word was brought into England; but it is no longer applicable, for, of all political courtiers, none are more servile than the Whigs; and if ever they should arrive at power during the reign of a young king or queen, they will humour all their whims, encourage luxury and profusion, and prove that *Whiggamors* or *Whigs* are most fawning courtiers."

"I cannot concur with you in your sweeping satire," said the captain. "History has shown us that the Whigs have opposed with much more resolution and energy the frivolity and extravagance of the English Court than ever the Tories have done; and I am one of those who anticipate much good from a change of

administration. When it may take place I cannot tell,— but I am told, the Duke of Clarence will call the Whigs to power as soon as he shall ascend the throne."

"For my part," observed Mr. Morgan, "I have an aversion to both parties. I have quite as much right to expect a reform in church and state from Sir Robert, as I have from Mr. Oasis Millet, or Lord John of Bedford; my colours are those of the people, and I never conceal them. Those who belong to the Whig or Tory school may say, that whoever has a true value for Church and State should avoid the extremes of Whiggism for the sake of the former, and the extremes of Toryism on account of the latter. I care for neither Church nor State, Whig or Tory; but I plant everywhere, in my small sphere of thought and action, the flag of 'Reform,' and my flag will beat all the rest off the field."

Sir Edward Clapperton said little. "I am a member of Parliament," he thought to himself, "and it will not do for me to compromise myself. I am a Tory at present, it is true,— but there is no saying what may happen. The cry for reform is extending greatly. Those who are Tories now, may hereafter become Whigs; and the Whigs of this year may be

Radicals next. I must be cautious. I came in for Warnstable less as a Tory than as the poor man's friend; and, if I can, I will remain faithful to this motto."

Sir Edward remained behind at Captain Macfarlane's, till all the rest had left,—for he wished to have a chat about Lucy.

"Well, my dear Macfarlane," said Sir Edward, "so you are in love with Lucy Dawson, — but, you know, she has not a penny. She 's monstrous pretty, and the sweetest-tempered girl I ever saw; but what are you to do with the chickens as well as the hen? Your income is more than sufficient for your present mode of life,— and no doubt you save money. Even a wife you might manage to get on with, and keep the wolf from the door; but if Lucy should make you a present of half-a-dozen children in six years, — what would you do then?"

"Why then we must drink bottled table-beer instead of old port," replied the captain smilingly, "and eat mutton chops and potatoes."

"Oh, with all my heart, my dear Macfarlane," said Sir Edward; "if it 's to be love in a cottage,— watercresses, morning dew, and all that sort of thing,— of course, you can manage

it; but then country 's the word, not London; — and I will come and help you milk the cow."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the captain; "the M.P. for Warnstable turned dairyman! But, you know, Sir Edward, I have some tolerably good expectations for the future; and what can be a better dowry for a woman to possess, than cheerfulness, good humour, and prudence? I believe in my conscience that Lucy possesses all these."

"Indeed she does," replied Sir Edward; "but what says Colonel Dawson?"

"Here is his letter—I received it this morning," said the captain; and Sir Edward read as follows:—

"Clapham.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have deeply reflected, and seriously deliberated with Mrs. Dawson on the very important communication you have done me the favour to make, with reference to our dear Lucy; and without pledging myself to any course which I may deem it my duty take, I feel that, in the first place, I should desire to become personally acquainted with a gentleman aspiring to her hand. She has no fortune, it is true, but she is an inestimable treasure in herself; and although I feel little doubt

that you are as respectable in private life as you have been zealous and honourable in your public service, still I should like to have a more intimate knowledge of yourself, your views, and your intentions, before I proceed further. Mrs. Dawson fully concurs with me in this sentiment; and I rely on your honour as a soldier and a gentleman, that you will not communicate further with our daughter until we shall have conferred together. The whole of the happiness of her future life depends on the step she now takes; and you will know how to appreciate a mother's and father's anxiety. On any day you shall feel disposed to spend some hours here, we shall be charmed to see you; but you will kindly favour us with a line the previous morning, intimating your intention. When we meet, we will be frank and loyal as British officers; and as, from all I hear, this is your character, you will not be offended by this observation. And, with the best compliments of Mrs. Dawson, I remain

"Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"G. Dawson."

"Captain Macfarlane."

"That is decidedly favourable, I think," said Sir Edward.

"I am glad that is your opinion," replied the captain. "I feared, from what Lucy hinted, that the great objection would be to my age, as the colonel is averse to disparity in ages."

"Oh, the difference is not so very great," observed Sir Edward. "Besides, though Lucy is a charming creature, girls without fortunes now-a-days are as bad off in England as they are in France."

"And worse too," replied the captain, "for if a woman has no fortune in France, she *will* marry to live on a fourth or fifth floor, and be graceful and tasteful on 100*l.* a year; whereas in England, if a woman has not even a good wardrobe for her dowry, apartments will not do, but she must have a house, and not one but even two or three servants. Such is not the case with Lucy. She would carry sunshine, peace, and frugality into the home of her husband,—and would render me the happiest of men."

"To-morrow I dine and spend the evening with the Dawsons," said Sir Edward; "do not go there till the next day, and I think my visit will prepare the way for yours. I have already written a long letter of three pages in reply to the colonel's inquiries,—and what I shall say to-morrow will be confirmatory of all I believe and feel, that you will make Lucy very happy."

"Always the same kind-hearted, glorious fellow, Sir Edward," said the captain, and he shook him warmly by the hand as he rose to leave.

"The next time we shall meet will be probably at Bath," said Sir Edward; "make my house your home, and, believe me, all I can do to aid you in the accomplishment of your wishes shall be effected."

The next morning Sir Edward was favoured with the visit of his elector Mr. Smart, the Warnstable attorney, to breakfast. Sir Edward had been so annoyed at his own *dénouement* on the preceding day, on presenting the petition, that he would have given both his ears to have recalled his promise of watching and managing the Inclosure Bill in the House of Commons.

"The bill has been read a second time," said Mr. Smart; "and it has now to go before a committee. We must prove the preamble of the bill, and endeavour to conciliate Lord Calcerton. Sir George Binkton is an admirable manager of private bills, from his long experience in the House; but Lord Calcerton is most hostile, and has great weight in the county."

"Who is he? — and what is he?" asked Sir Edward.

"He is a very wealthy man, and a bit of a Radical," replied Mr. Smart.

"And what are the grounds of his opposition to the Inclosure Bill?" inquired Sir Edward.

"Why, first, that the quantity of land allotted to him, as his portion of the common lands, is not sufficient; secondly, that he is a great grazier, and finds it to his interest to leave the lands open, as at present; and, thirdly, he pretends that he espouses the cause of the poor, who will be injured by the inclosure."

"The fact is, then," said Sir Edward, "that this is a selfish opposition on his part; and yet, as a Radical, and, I suppose, popular member and partisan, he affects to be vastly concerned about the poor."

"Precisely so," replied the Warnstable attorney; "and if this was known to the committee, his opposition would be unavailing."

"Then it *shall* be known," said Sir Edward; "but I am going out of town for a week or ten days, and cannot attend to it till my return."

Mr. Smart expressed himself somewhat disappointed at the delay, but promised to see the parliamentary agent, and fix such a day for the committee as should be agreeable to Sir Edward.

"Let me have a list of all the surrounding landowners," said Sir Edward, "with an account of the quantity of lands held by each; also their opinions, whether for or against the inclosure. Cause likewise an account to be furnished me of the average heads of cattle belonging to each proprietor, which graze or feed on the common lands in the course of the year; and, finally, supply me with a copy of the petition in favour of the bill which I presented yesterday, together with the names and residences of the petitioners, and some notes as to what they will gain by the passing of the measure. When you send me all this information to Bath, I will consult a member of the House of Lords, whose experience will be of great use to me; and will endeavour to secure the passing of the measure."

The Warnstable lawyer was not less enchanted with the suavity and politeness of Sir Edward, than he was with his aptitude for business, and, though last not least, with his sumptuous breakfast; and on leaving the hotel, declared to the M.P., "That in the event of a contested election at a future time, he was Sir Edward's, for life and death."

The dinner at Colonel Dawson's was friendly, lively, and pleasant; and on the next morning

Sir Edward proceeded, according to appointment, in his family travelling carriage, to the city, to conduct Mrs. Catherwood and Maria to Bath. His charming *compagnes de voyage* were both ready to accompany him. Mrs. Catherwood was dressed in a black velvet pelisse, whilst Maria had a satin cloak lined with ermine, with ermine collar, boa, and muff.

"Why, Maria, you look as handsome and regal as the queen of the world," said Sir Edward. "I don't know what the Bath people will say, but, for my part, I think they will all be jealous."

Maria laughed outright at the idea of any one being jealous of her, for her perfect unconsciousness of her attractions formed the charm of her character.

"That is a good joke, Edward," she said; "your lords and your ladies, your dukes and your duchesses, to be jealous of a little city girl!"

"And with very good reason too," replied Sir Edward.

"*Tant mieux*," said Maria, laughing all the while, and showing her regular, beauteous, and pearly teeth; for she was neither ignorant of French, German, or Italian, though she spoke them all with a little English accent, which was not by any means disagreeable.

"You will be as happy as the day is long, Maria," said her brother George, as he kissed her a dozen times before handing her with Sir Edward into the carriage. "I was never so happy in my life as at Bath; pray remember me to Charlotte and Sophia; and don't forget his lordship, who was very kind to me. Beggars description!"

"You must come again before we leave," said Sir Edward, "and we'll try and make you as happy as you were before."

Young Catherwood smiled, and, after a few more adieus and shaking of hands, the small but happy party drove off towards Hyde Park Corner.

The weather was remarkably fine. The sun shone brightly though the air was cool. It resembled an early spring, rather than a winter, morning, and Mrs. Catherwood felt grateful, affectionate, and happy. She was a love of a woman:—full of sense, talent, and goodness,—but the latter prevailed: her temper was perfect. She was the most equable person in the world,— or at least one of them. Nothing ruffled her serenity. Not that she did not feel, —and that acutely; but her moral and religious principles kept all the defects of her character, if she had any, in abeyance, and

brought all her virtues forward in striking, but not ostentatious prominence. She thought disparagingly of no one but herself, — and yet she was the last person in the world of whom she should have thought so. Her husband was inferior to herself in mind and talent, but not in heart or worth. He knew her mental superiority, — but she took care he should never feel it. Indefatigable in his attention to business, as well as invariably upright and conscientious in his conduct, he secured the respect of all with whom he came in contact, and his good disposition enabled him to support many hard rubs of fortune, which sometimes had threatened seriously to affect his position in life. But happily, though they were felt severely for the moment, they did not permanently affect him, and few men in business had so many friends as Mr. Catherwood.

"In consequence of Maria's delicate state of health, I have written to the master of the hotel at Hungerford," said Sir Edward to Mrs. Catherwood, "and directed him to have rooms prepared for us against our arrival. Hungerford is just sixty-four miles from London, and, after a good night's rest, I hope Maria will be able to continue her journey to-morrow. That journey will be a short one, only forty-four

miles; and my sisters will be on the *qui vive* to receive you, though they have been thrown into a sad state of alarm since I last saw you."

"What do you say, Edward?" asked Maria, with true affectionate interest; "Charlotte and Sophia been thrown into a state of alarm? Why,— what about?"

"I thought your curiosity would be excited," replied Sir Edward.

"No — no,—not my curiosity, I assure you; but my love for your sisters' interests and all that concerns them."

"Well, never mind the motives," said Mrs. Catherwood, "I am sure they were good; — pray do tell us about it, or what you mean, Edward."

So Sir Edward narrated, from beginning to end, the whole affair of the anonymous letter, — proposal of marriage, — showing the letter to Lord Swainton,— journey to Bath,— duel,— and illness of Sir Felix Montague; which both Mrs. Catherwood and Maria listened to with breathless attention.

"Oh, I 'm glad Sophia 's going to have him," exclaimed Maria, as soon as Sir Edward had concluded his well-told and amusing narrative; "that wretched Lord Nonpareil, how I do abominate him! I hope I shall never see him. I

do think I should so frown at him that he would be frightened."

"That 's excellent," said Mrs. Catherwood, and laughed right merrily.

"I don't know why your mamma laughs so," observed Sir Edward, most seriously; "your frowns would, in my opinion, be as irresistible as your smiles. I should pity the fellow on whom you frowned, Maria, that is, if I did not loathe him."

"And do you really think Sir Felix Montague a suitable match for Sophia?" asked Mrs. Catherwood of Sir Edward with great feeling, and with even maternal affection.

"I will tell you my opinion," replied Sir Edward, "for I can do so to you with confidence. I am not fond of marriages where ages are so far from being equal as is the case with dear Sophia and Sir Felix; but, although I have the right to advise, I have not the right of a *veto*, as in the case of a father or mother. Sir Felix is the nephew and heir of Lord Montague. His uncle is a wealthy but a stingy man, — mean to a proverb. Sir Felix has been rather a gay man. This I know for a certainty, — but he has sown his wild oats, and sighs to settle down in life. He has no debts, — or at least very few. He

is a thorough gentleman. Every word, thought, movement, action, is gentlemanly. He has proved, by his conduct in this duel, that he values his character and is a man of honour. Sophia's fortune I shall have settled on her. It shall not be liable to any debts, though, if I am not greatly mistaken, he is not disposed to make any. Sophia's fortune, and his income, will be quite sufficient to enable them to live in very good style, with a close carriage and a pair of horses. At the death of his father he will be wealthy; and, as the estates are entailed, Lord Montague cannot, even if he would, deprive him of a farthing of his fortune. Montague is gay, lively, well-informed, witty, and good-tempered. He is devoted to Sophia, and Charlotte writes me word that she thinks if Sir Felix had died, it would have caused Sophia's death. I don't know how it was, but from the very first time Sophia saw Montague at Clapham Hall she took a liking to him. Charlotte and myself both observed this; and before that time Sophia never appeared to feel any sort of attachment to any one, except ourselves and your family. You know her aversion to widowers, I believe. She is almost angry with Charlotte for her attachment to Lord Swainton. I wish Montague had been a few years younger,

—but I am convinced it will be a most happy marriage."

"Heaven grant that it may be so!" said Mrs. Catherwood, with all that fervour and truth which belonged to her character; "I love Sophia as my own child; and it would deeply grieve me to see her make an unwise choice. Titles and estates, fashion and fortune, are all very well in their way; but sterling virtues, you know, Sir Edward, are better than sterling gold."

"Go on, my dear Mrs. Catherwood," said Sir Edward; "you are aware how I love to hear you talk. I often think of the good counsels of bygone days which you gave me in the dear old house where Maria and I have romped so often when boys and girls, together in —— Street."

"Oh! you're very good indeed," replied Mrs. Catherwood, "to remember my lessons for so long a time. Not all schoolmistresses have such justice done them, or the scholars would turn out better."

The day passed most pleasantly. Sir Edward gave a detailed description of the whole of the Warnstable election, of his journey to Suffolk, of his last few days' attendance at the House of Commons; and Mrs. Catherwood re-

counted the incidents of Sir Edward's youth, of Maria's mad pranks when a child, and of Christmas scenes of mirth and joviality, when the late Sir Edward Clapperton and his lady were still living.

Hungerford was reached by nine o'clock, after more than two hours' stay to dine at Reading; and Maria, somewhat fatigued with her journey, though both amused and happy, at once retired to rest. Mrs. Catherwood and Sir Edward continued their conversation on city men, city politics, and the progress of the cry for "reform." She expressed her regret that Sir Edward had taken up the Tory side of the question, but learned with pleasure that he was not pledged, to any great extent, in that way at Warnstable, and that he was rather looked on there as a social than a political candidate.

The next morning they left at ten for Bath; and at a little after four, after easy and short stages, arrived in Milsom Street.

"Dearest Maria!" cried Charlotte and Sophia at the same moment, as they once more saw her lovely face and beauteous expression, "how exquisite you look! Why what a darling you are!" And poor Maria was almost overcome by her varied emotions.

Their reception of Mrs. Catherwood was not less cordial. They had prepared for her the best bed-room; arranged it with all that they knew would suit her taste and recollections, and kissed her so often and so heartily that poor Sir Edward was for the moment almost forgotten.

But they soon turned to their brother, and gave him likewise their kindest greeting. "I have heard of your visit to Clapham," said Lucy in a very winning way, "the day before yesterday, Sir Edward. Mamma says she loves you better than ever."

"How is Sir Felix?" asked Sir Edward; "and where is he?"

"At the York," replied Charlotte, "still half a prisoner. We have only seen him twice; but he is longing to shake you by the hand, Edward. Pray go and see him."

"Immediately," replied Sir Edward; "for I expect Lord Swainton will be here to-day."

"He is here already," said Sophia; "and Lady Arabella is with him. They arrived three days ago, and expected you in the evening. You did not tell him of your intention to remain at Hungerford the night. They have already sent out cards for a *soirée*."

"Indeed!" replied Sir Edward; "I am sur-

prised at that. But how is he? and where is he, too?"

"Oh! he's quite well," said Charlotte, "and kept us all dying with laughter till past twelve last night. We longed for you all to be here. He gave us a description of his going down to take possession of his estates, and of his quiet daughter-in-law Peggy, the wife of Scrope. His caricatures of the tenants, and stewards, and farmers, were to the life, I am sure. I wish he would repeat them to you, Edward."

"But where is he?"

"Next door but one, with Lady Arabella," said Charlotte. "Oh! such eyes,—black as those of a gazelle, but her complexion as pale as death. I used to think you pale, dear Maria; but Lady Arabella is *so* pale. Why she beggars description! The most beautiful head of hair, though, I ever saw; and a charming figure. As to Lord Swainton, he thinks her 'the most perfect creature now living,' and actually asked us before her if we did not think so too."

"Well, and what did you say?" inquired Sir Edward.

"Nothing at all," said Lucy. "We were all silent, and looked silly; but his lordship came to our relief by laughing at us."

Sir Edward sallied forth on his double mission of visiting the sick and admiring the beautiful. Lord Swainton and Lady Arabella were out. He left his card, and wrote on the back how he longed for their company to dinner. As to Montague, he was overjoyed to see Sir Edward, and gladly consented to join the family circle, taking Sir Edward's arm, and walking down to Milsom Street with him.

"What a happy meeting!" said Sir Felix, as Sir Edward led him into the drawing-room. Sophia smiled the affirmative; but the particulars of all that transpired must be adjourned to the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

With that malignant envy which turns pale,
And sickens, even if a friend prevail;
Which merit and success pursues with hate,
And damns the worth it cannot imitate.

CHURCHILL.

"Life 's a poor player"—then "play out the play,
Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye
Much less on what you do, than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you seem, but always what you see.

BYRON.

LORD SWAINTON and Lady Arabella accepted the somewhat late and abrupt but obliging and hospitable invitation of Sir Edward to dinner, and as the clock struck seven they entered the drawing-room. His lordship, who had wholly forgotten all he had previously heard of the expected arrival of Mrs. Catherwood and Maria, was evidently disconcerted for a few moments by the appearance of strangers; but on learning their names, and on ascertaining that they were the mother and sister of his young friend who

had visited Sir Oscar Morbleu's, he became as unrestrained and cheerful as usual, introducing Lady Arabella to Sir Edward in the following most extraordinary manner:—

"This is my *beautiful* daughter, Sir Edward. I have a nervous daughter, a widowed daughter, and a musical daughter. Dorothy is my nervous daughter; Amelia my widowed daughter; and Kate my musical daughter, — sings in the morning like a lark, in the afternoon like a canary, and in the evening much better than a nightingale. But Arabella, she is my *beautiful* daughter. A sad saucy girl, as I find to my sorrow; but she must speak for herself. Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

Sir Edward bowed, smiled, looked and felt partly ashamed, but more amused, and simply replied "that his lordship was indeed most kind in introducing Lady Arabella to himself and his sisters."

Lord Swainton at once descanted in glowing terms to Mrs. Catherwood, on the amiabilities and virtues of her son, and then on the beauty and interesting appearance of Maria. This was done in a loud whisper, too loud not to be heard at all, and not loud enough to be heard distinctly. Maria was not wholly a stranger however to what was passing, and was at once amused with the volubility of his lordship.

"And so you are Miss Maria Catherwood, mademoiselle," said his lordship, turning to Maria who blushed most deeply. "I have heard of you with the hearing of the ear, and now my eyes behold you. Ha! ha! ha! You have had bad health,—the winter is too severe for you, — the winds of heaven have visited your fair form too roughly, — the nipping blasts have chilled your frame, frozen the genial current of your soul, caused your lily cheeks to become yet paler, and to make you start and shiver like those delicate exotics which cannot support the cold of our northern climates. You should reside at Madeira, breathe a warmer air, live in a state of perfect calmness, avoid excitement, never be disturbed by the howling of the tempest or by the ungenial temperature of such climes as these, but enjoy perpetual sunshine, aromatic breezes, and the gentle sighing of the sweet wind of the south. Beggars description!"

Maria laughed outright. She had no notion of becoming a hot-house plant. She was not ignorant of course that her frame was delicate and her constitution by no means robust, but still she knew that ordinarily her health was not bad, and that she got through the winter with as few colds and annoyances as most people.

"You would spoil me, my lord," said Maria, when she had somewhat recovered from her mirth. "You would render me quite unfit for my usual residence, for London fogs and vapours, and for all the habits and prospects of my future life."

"Ah! but I would have you transplanted from the dark valley of London to the bright shores of the Azores, not to return to the gloomy and heavy atmosphere of the metropolis, but to remain where an equal temperature, pure air, and sunny breezes would prolong your life to the age of Methuselah."

"I thank you very much, my lord, for your kindness," replied Maria, "but I have no wish to be separated from those I love for any *earthly* paradise of which I have yet heard; and I am sure papa would not be induced to leave London for the Azores upon a mere speculation of climate. I shall do very well where I am, and have no doubt in a few weeks I shall enjoy my usual state of health."

"Well, Sir Edward," said his lordship, turning to him, "what say you to my proposal? I am advising Miss Catherwood that the climate of Madeira would best suit her, and that a moderately warm climate would ensure her an eternity of existence."

"Oh, we should be delighted to secure her so long a life as the one you speak of," replied Sir Edward, "but we could not spare her absence for a thousandth part of that time. You must know, my lord, that we always call Miss Catherwood, 'Maria,' for we have been brought up together from childhood, and are all brothers, sisters, and playfellows."

"I shall be very happy to make one of the party," said his lordship. "Pray let me be a brother, or sister, or playfellow, or what you will, so long as I am something in so agreeable a community."

The announcement of dinner put an end to this *badinage*, and Sir Edward Clapperton offered his arm to Mrs. Catherwood. Lord Swainton handed down Miss Charlotte, and Sir Felix wished to be the chaperon of Sophia, but she requested him to take charge of Lady Arabella, whilst herself, Lucy, and Maria, made a charming trio at the end of the procession.

Lord Swainton was relieved from a considerable portion of his anxiety with respect to Maria, from the declaration of Sir Edward "that they were all brothers and sisters together." Not, indeed, that he was either ignorant of or indifferent to the fact that these early associations often terminate in the most

intimate and endearing affections, and are consummated by marriages apparently "made in heaven." His lordship watched with his quick and penetrating eye the effect produced on Sir Edward by the beauty of his daughter Arabella. She was calculated, by the brilliancy of her eyes, her pale and beautiful face, her raven black hair, and the *tout ensemble* of her figure and carriage, to arrest the attention and secure the admiration of all who loved beauty and revelled in it. She was engaging also in her manners, talked a great deal and eloquently, smiled much, laughed heartily, and was witty and cheerful, gay and animated, and soon engrossed at the dinner-table a considerable portion of the conversation. When her face was lighted up with an expressive smile, denoting much pleasure, she was exceedingly handsome; and Mrs. Catherwood whispered to Sir Edward to look at her, at one particular moment, when she was describing the effect which the falls of the Rhine had produced on her mind at the first moment of seeing them.

"I felt myself nothing," she said to Charlotte; "I seemed like a feather on the mighty ocean, or a straw among the breakers. On rushed the waters, sweeping all before them. I watched some light objects as they were dash-

ed forward, and I felt that I was as light as they,— that I also was on a mighty torrent,— that the stream of time was dashing me onwards too,— and that I had no power of resistance. It is when contemplating mountains, torrents, cataracts, and the mighty sea, that our own littleness, and yet our own vastness, are presented before us,— and that we feel most truly and most religiously."

"How beautifully she talks," whispered Maria to Sophia; "I have often felt what she says, when residing with mamma at the back of the Isle of Wight, but I could not express my thoughts so well as Lady Arabella."

During the whole of the dinner and dessert Lord Swainton drew her out into conversation, applauded some of her extravagant speeches, and looked delighted at the impression she had evidently produced on all present. As to Maria, she could not refrain from looking at her constantly; and when the ladies withdrew, Sir Edward proposed,

"Lady Arabella and all the ladies."

Lord Swainton was too skilful a diplomatist both in politics and in love, to seek to effect more at the first interview; so he changed the subject of conversation, and went straight to the duel.

"Well, my dear Montague," said his lord-

ship, "I have not yet had time to tell you personally,—what I have done by letter,—how delighted I am to see you here to-day. The first accounts I received of you alarmed me excessively: as to Nonpareil, he is ruined for life. What says Lady Muchberry?"

"She has cut him for ever," replied Sir Felix; "no one can be more kind than she has been. Twice and thrice a day she has called in her carriage, or sent her servants to inquire after my health. Nonpareil is off, and bills are stuck up in the windows, I am told, announcing his house to let. As for poor Paxworth, who was so mad for a duel, and would not listen to any other mode of adjustment when I called on him in London, he was so desperately annoyed when he thought I should die, that, I believe, had such been the issue of the business he would have blown his brains out. Nonpareil acted like a scoundrel. His false pretexts about Mrs. Wantage added insult to injury. I will give you the history of Mrs. Wantage's affair:—She was the widow of a post-captain; lived near Soho Square; and by her beauty and wit fascinated Nonpareil. She thought Nonpareil a single man, and felt convinced that she would become Lady Nonpareil. At length some one of Nonpareil's acquaintance

wrote her two or three letters, in which they cautioned her not to confide in his lordship; that although he was divorced from his wife, her ladyship was not dead, that he could not marry again; that any marriage contracted whilst she was living would be null and void; and that as she, Mrs. Wantage, was now informed that such was the case, if she allowed Lord Nonpareil to continue his visits it would be known that her character was far from being either respectable or virtuous. Mrs. Wantage took the alarm, showed the letters to Nonpareil, and he declared that he thought, though the handwriting was disguised, that still there was a great resemblance between mine and that in which the letters in question were written. Nonpareil accused me of having written to Mrs. Wantage. I assured him that he was mistaken: he required a sort of inquest into the origin of the letters, and finally was convinced, first, that I had nothing to do with them; and, secondly, that they had been written and left at her house by a Mr: Gray. Between writing the letters in question and the discovery of the author, Mr. Gray had gone abroad, and Nonpareil, who had previously quarrelled with him on another subject, could not obtain the satisfaction he had the right to require. From that

time, when Nonpareil wrote to say he was quite satisfied of my innocence and expressed his deep regret for having made the charge, until a few days since, when he dared again to accuse me of having written the letters, we had been on very excellent terms, — not seeing each other often, it is true,— but still when we did do so being as friendly as before the false accusation against me had been made. His conduct then, after all that had passed, in attempting to ruin me in the opinion of Major Wrightson as well as in that of Colonel Paxworth and yourselves, was deeply atrocious; and, I am told, that such was the effect produced in Bath during the first two or three days after the duel, that if he had shown himself in public his reception would have been such as might have led to serious consequences. I am glad he did not. He could not have vindicated his own character, and he might have paid dearly for his temerity. As to you my dear Swainton, and you Sir Edward, and your family, I never can feel sufficiently grateful. The people at the 'York' also behaved most admirably; and, indeed, I could not have been treated better at my own home."

"Except Miss Sophia had nursed you," said his lordship.

"Ah! then indeed," replied Montague, "I should have got well much more rapidly,—unless I had feigned sickness for the pleasure of being nursed."

Sir Edward now led the conversation, and complained to his lordship of his isolated position in the House of Commons. He said that he knew no one; that no one appeared to care about him; that even the whippers-in had not spoken to him; that the chiefs of the Tory party had taken no notice of him; that those who had been most civil to him in the House, were the Whig-Radical members of the city of London, and that he hoped his lordship would hit upon some plan by which he could become acquainted with some of the Tory members, since otherwise his seat in Parliament would be more annoying and troublesome, than either useful or pleasant.

"You must belong to a club," said his lordship; "nothing to be done without that. The *Carlton* will introduce you to everything, though there is some difficulty in the way of your election. At the Carlton you will see all and hear everything. It beats all the rest for life, wit, wealth, aristocracy, and influence. Nothing like the Carlton! The Carlton governs the world. Its resources are inexhaus-

tible; its ramifications universal; its members embody in themselves all the interest of the Church, the Bar, the Legislature, and all that is worth anything out of the universities. It influences the daily, weekly, and monthly press; it decides the fate of cabinets and cabinet measures; it is looked up to by all parties. The Whigs fear its decisions. The Radicals dread its wrath, much more than that of the Government. And it is at the Carlton that the witty and wise congregate to defeat faction, to raise the hopes and courage of the Government, to carry defeat and dismay into the camps of its enemies, and to take energetic measures for putting down the half-stifled but still not extinct cry for Reform!"

Sir Edward was apprehensive that that which had occurred in the House of Commons might take place at the Carlton, and that he should feel his isolation there yet more poignantly, inasmuch as there it would be personal. "It will be a long time, my lord," said Sir Edward, "before the aristocracy will forgive me my city origin."

"Oh! when you shall have married into an old and noble family," replied his lordship, "all that will be forgotten, and you will be regarded as one of us. I knew what would be your case

in the House of Commons, and it was therefore I urged you to take to yourself a wife. At the Carlton you will meet with some civil or needy men, who will not trouble themselves about your origin, so long as you will lose at play and treat them with marked attention and respect. But you are quite right when you say that the aristocracy of this country looks to title more than to fortune, and to the coat of arms, more than to the banker's book. If you pick up some nice little countess or duchess, or form an alliance with an old and noble family, your position will instantly change, and you will be known, received, and respected everywhere. When once you are known, Sir Edward, all will love you; but the great difficulty is to be known. In the meantime I advise you by all means to become a member of the Carlton. I can introduce you to half-a-dozen men. They will introduce you to others. Montague himself is a member; and you will get on. The United Service or the University clubs are both admirable; but you have never been to college, and are no military or naval man. The Carlton is your affair, and you must become a member. There you will see some Tory fire, Tory fury, Tory zeal, Tory leaders, Tory hatred, Tory spite, Tory play,

Tory frolic, Tory fun, Tory everything. Beggars description!"

The mode of admission, and how to set about it, then formed the topic of discussion, until the ladies desired their attendance in the drawing-room.

On their arrival among the ladies new causes for anxiety and surprise awaited his lordship. Lady Muchberry was there, in deep conversation with Lord Swainton's daughter, and a beautiful creature, (whom at first he did not recognise, and who was a perfect stranger to Sir Edward,) whom her ladyship had brought with her to a quiet family *soirée* at the Clappertons. It was Lady Charlotte Dowling.

Lady Charlotte was tall, graceful, elegant, and natural. She was by no means fair, but her blue eyes were most winning; her hair was auburn; her features more expressive than perfect; but she was a lady. No one could mistake her. Belonging to an old Whig family, which had been greatly reduced by the extravagance and love of play of its last chief, she had been thrown a good deal into mixed society, and yet had retained all her dignity and bearing. Whilst Lady Arabella had resorted to reading, to recitation, to poetry, to charades, to much and loud singing, and to the pianoforte and

harp, to ensure to herself that command in that sort of society to which the fallen fortunes of Lord Swainton, before the death of Lord Warminster had raised him, had too much reduced her; Lady Charlotte Dowling had remained quiet, calm, unaffected, the woman of quality and *haut ton*, and though with no man-servant, and with but two maid-servants, had managed several years her father's small domestic establishment, and had contrived to keep herself from descending in the scale of society. Lady Muchberry was not her style of woman, but she had experienced great kindness from her on several occasions; and Lord Dowling, the father of Lady Charlotte, who was so gouty as to be nearly confined to his room during many months of the year, had found much comfort from the friendly whist parties which were made round his couch. Lady Charlotte was swan-like in appearance, but without the self-complacency and pride of that beautiful bird. She was a great favourite everywhere amongst those who could appreciate her noble character; although some said "she was too religious;" others "that she was too stately for her small fortune;" and all agreed "that she would never get married."

Lady Muchberry was no great matchmaker.

She was ordinarily too fond of cards and of small gaming, to interest herself much in the happiness or misery of others. She generally found enough to do at home, especially as she kept late hours, and would not do justice to her own advancing years and somewhat impaired constitution; but though ordinarily rather indifferent than otherwise to the matrimonial arrangements of her friends and acquaintances, she took a deep interest in the fate of Lady Charlotte. Sir Edward Clapperton was just the sort of man she wished to see her marry. He was rich, honourable, and respected. The rank and importance of the Dowling family would be of consequence to a man who, after all, in the scale of aristocracy, was only the son of a city baronet; whilst the fortune and amiabilities of the Clapperton family would make up for their origin. Lady Muchberry explained to her young friend, then twenty-five years of age, her wishes and projects; and during the absence of Sir Edward, had called on the Miss Clappertons, accompanied by Lady Charlotte Dowling. They had in their turn called on her, found her occupied with embroidery; her small salon tastefully decorated and arranged, and an air of dignified quietness and lady-like demeanour and order about her, which quite charmed

her Milsom Street visitors. When the Miss Clappertons left the house of Lady Charlotte, they both involuntarily exclaimed, "That 's the woman I should like to see Edward marry, even if she has not a single sovereign for her fortune." Sophia said as much to Lady Muchberry the next day, but added at the same time, "That she believed Edward had no thoughts of marrying for the present."

Lady Muchberry had become a great favourite with the Miss Clappertons, and especially with Sophia, since she had taken the part of Montague in the affair of the duel, and had shown Charlotte the letter she had written to Lord Nonpareil, reproaching him for his conduct, and refusing any longer to receive him at her house; but Lady Muchberry had learnt with surprise that Lord Swainton's offer to Miss Charlotte had been accepted; and when the gentlemen entered the drawing-room, she was whispering to Lady Arabella her concern at her father's conduct.

"My father is an extraordinary man," replied Lady Arabella; "his children have long since ceased to be astonished at anything. I think, however, that when first the idea of marrying Miss Clapperton came into his mind, it was to improve his ruined fortunes. Since

then they have improved themselves; and perhaps if he were now to make his choice, it might be in another quarter. He has not said this, or even hinted as much; but still that is my opinion."

"A woman of my age would better suit your father than a mere girl," said Lady Muchberry; "but I suppose it is too late for us to direct his attention to any other quarter."

"Oh! I think so, indeed," replied Lady Arabella; "but who is your graceful friend I see with you this evening?"

"Oh! she is the only child of poor old Lord Dowling. You met him once at my house three or four years ago."

"I remember him very well: old, infirm, and gouty. Is he rich?"

"No, he is not," replied Lady Muchberry, "but she will be after her father's death; for the estates will then come to her free, as he has only mortgaged all his life interests."

Lady Arabella already felt, "Lady Charlotte Dowling will be my rival;" and she resolved not to make an enemy, but a friend both of her and of Lady Muchberry, that she might neutralise their influence, instead of convert them into foes. She knew how much might be said by Lady Muchberry, as well as by Lady Char-

lotte, exceedingly disagreeable respecting the latter years of her father's life, and other matters; and, until she perceived she had gained the affections of Sir Edward, and obtained a declaration on his part, she determined to remain most friendly with both her ladyship and her *protégée.*

Lord Swainton no sooner entered the drawing-room than he addressed himself to Lady Muchberry, and spoke to Lady Charlotte Dowling. He complimented both; the one on her good looks, and the other on her improved appearance since he met her last season at Lady Muchberry's. Still his lordship was not himself. He saw Sir Edward surrounded by a galaxy of beauty; and though Maria gave him little uneasiness, Lady Charlotte's appearance on the stage was by no means an agreeable surprise; but his lordship could never be unhappy long, especially as he invariably trusted to his lucky stars, and more so than ever since the unexpected death of Lord Warminster *without a will.* Coffee, tea, and chit-chat were followed by a demand for music purposely made by Montague to please Lord Swainton; and his lordship conducted in triumph his daughter to the piano. There she was overwhelming. Her voice was perfect. Her styles of singing were varied.

She knew everything. The French, the German, the Italian schools were all familiar to her; and with admirable tact and talent she sang some English songs calculated to prove to Sir Edward and his sisters, who after all were but citizens in her opinion, that she was as attached to all that was popular and national as they or their former friends could possibly be. "God save the King" wound up an hour and a half's concert; and at its termination Sir Edward expressed, in long and loud plaudits, his admiration and delight.

As to Lord Swainton, he was in raptures. He urged Lady Charlotte Dowling "to favour them with some of her delightful music." Lady Charlotte declined. He besought Maria "to oblige them with her sweet notes;" but Maria blushed, and asked his lordship "How he could expect any one would play or sing after what they had heard that evening?"

"You are a charming girl," said his lordship; "I am quite in love with you. You will make me a delightful daughter. I've a rogue of a son who will run away with your heart, perhaps, one of these days. I am sure you can sing; but we will not have all the good things at once. That shall be for to-morrow."

Maria blushed, hung down her head, looked,

as she felt, very modest, and only replied, "If I could sing and play as your daughter can, my lord, I think I should never quit my piano."

Sir Edward renewed his applause, thanked Lady Arabella most warmly for her evening's entertainment and pleasure, and accepted from his lordship for himself and his sisters an invitation to a quiet family *soirée* and musical party for the next evening at his house, to begin at the early hour of nine. His lordship did not invite either Lady Muchberry or Lady Charlotte Dowling, but proposed, in an under tone, the party to Sir Edward.

"She is a wonderful creature," said Maria to Mrs. Catherwood, when they returned to their room.

"Who?" inquired her mother.

"Why Lady Arabella, to be sure," replied Maria.

"I do not like her very much," said Mrs. Catherwood; "but I have not been so pleased for many years as I have been to-night with Lady Charlotte Dowling. If Sir Edward consults me, I should dissuade him from Lady Arabella, and implore him to take Lady Charlotte; that is, if she will accept his proposals."

"Do you think Edward likes her?" asked Maria with some anxiety.

"How can I tell, my dear?" replied Mrs. Catherwood; "you are just as able to judge as myself. I fear that he may be captivated by the talents and wonderful display of Lady Arabella; but I hope not."

Poor Maria hoped so too; but she never forgot for a single moment that she had left him so perfectly free in all his matrimonial arrangements, and felt really so free herself, except as far as her preferences prevented her, that she could have rejoiced at his happiness, were she sure he was happy, whatever might be his choice.

The next evening the rooms of Lord Swainton were full of the *beau monde;* and Lady Arabella was surrounded with flatterers. Music, cards, and quadrilles, were the amusements of the somewhat large and elegant assemblage, invited rather hastily, but received with much dignity and grace by Arabella. Sir Edward Clapperton turned over the pages of the music, and danced the first quadrille with Lady Arabella; and Lord Swainton felicitated himself on the impression which he no longer doubted his daughter had made on his young friend. The fact was, that his lordship was very fond of Sir Edward. Time was, that he would have promoted the union for the sake of the pecu-

niary advantage and settlement for life of his daughter; but Sir Edward's fortune was now much smaller than his lordship's, and he could have married Arabella to many a young nobleman. It was Sir Edward himself, noble, generous, honourable, young, handsome, kind-hearted, that he now desired for Arabella; and he was resolved to pursue his object with resolute and undaunted steps. Lord Swainton was enthusiastic in everything; and now his one great object was the marriage of Arabella with Sir Edward.

"Well, what do you think of her?" asked Charlotte of her brother, as they entered the drawing-room in Milsom Street on their return from Lord Swainton's. "Is she the sort of woman you admire, Edward?"

"That is not a fair question, Charlotte," interposed Mrs. Catherwood. "I would not advise Edward to answer you."

"Oh! never fear, never fear!" replied Sir Edward. "Miss Charlotte Clapperton, you are very cunning, my dear sister; but so am I,—and so now let me ask you, what do you think of her?"

"That she is making a dead set at you, Edward; that's what I think; and therefore take care of your heart."

"What do you say, Mrs. Catherwood?" asked Sir Edward. "Let me have your opinion."

"Why, that I would much rather hear that you were making a dead set at Lady Charlotte Dowling: that would, indeed, please me."

"I think so, indeed," said Sophia.

"Oh, what a lovely creature she is!" exclaimed Lucy.

"She is exceedingly graceful!" observed Maria.

"You are all a set of busy-bodies," said Sir Edward; "but I love you all dearly, and wish you good-night."

The ladies sat up another hour discussing, *en petit comité*, all that Lady Arabella had said, done, and looked, and, finally, it was unanimously agreed, that whatever might be the fate of Lady Charlotte, in whose praises all were vehement except Maria, at any rate Lady Arabella must not become Lady Clapperton.

The next day Sir Edward and the Miss Clappertons were invited to Lady Muchberry's, to take a quiet dinner and join a musical and card party in the evening. This was planned by Lady Muchberry, to bring Lady Charlotte once more under the special notice of Sir Edward.

The dinner party was very small. Sir Edward was honoured with every mark of civility

and special attention from Lady Muchberry, and Lady Charlotte was as elegant, winning, and charming as usual. She conversed without affectation or reserve, appeared to be pleased with the mild and gentlemanly conduct and candour of Sir Edward, and confirmed the Miss Clappertons in their opinion, "that she was a model of a woman." As Lady Muchberry's table was not large, Lucy and Maria remained at home, or rather dined at Lord Swainton's, and accompanied them to the *soirée* in the evening. In vain did Lady Muchberry seek to prevent Lady Arabella from playing and singing. Sir Edward asked her as a great favour, and the young men in the room were all clamorous for her performance. She yielded without reluctance to the general wish, and once more, during upwards of an hour, she enchanted a listening and captivated audience. Lady Muchberry was alone annoyed. She feared that the impression she thought had been produced by Lady Charlotte Dowling on the heart of Sir Edward would be weakened by Lady Arabella, and she secretly resolved to converse with him the next day.

"What do you think of my lovely friend Lady Charlotte?" asked her ladyship, when Sir Edward called to thank her for the most

agreeable evening he had spent the night before.

"That she is a most lady-like and charming person," replied Sir Edward.

"She is as good, kind, and delightful as she looks," said her ladyship; "and she is not engaged yet."

"I am surprised at that," said Sir Edward, "for one seldom meets with such a woman as Lady Charlotte."

"Her family is one of the oldest among the old nobility," remarked Lady Muchberry; "and at her father's death she will be wealthy."

Here the conversation dropped. Her ladyship was afraid of proceeding too far: especially as she knew more of the Miss Clappertons than she did of Sir Edward.

Two days afterwards Lord Swainton, Montague, and Sir Edward proceeded to London, and left the ladies in Milsom Street to their varied plots and plans, schemes and enterprises, to secure their favourite objects. Maria and Mrs. Catherwood entered but little into those plans; but still the latter maintained her opinion that Sir Edward would find in Lady Charlotte, an elegant, high-minded, virtuous, and invaluable wife.

CHAPTER IV.

Graced as thou art with all the pow'r of words,
So known, so honour'd at the House of Lords.

POPE.

'Tis from high life, high characters are drawn :
A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn ;
A judge is just, a chanc'llor juster still ;
A gownman learn'd, a bishop what you will ;
Wise if a minister ; but if a king
More wise, more learn'd, more just, more ev'rything.

POPE.

SIR EDWARD CLAPPERTON'S introduction to the Carlton was attended with some difficulty. His politics were unknown; his family was but of yesterday; his antecedents were undoubtedly most honourable in the "city:" but what had the city to do with the Carlton? Sir Edward, like most other men, desired that the more ardently which was attended with doubt and trouble; and when he received official intelligence of his nomination, he felt that he was admitted into the great aristocratic family of the country.

"I am now," said he, "not only an M.P. for an important and wealthy borough, but an associate of dukes, earls, and the first political men of Great Britain. It must surely be my own fault now, if I do not get on in the fashionable world, and take my standing with the old established families of the land. The coldness and indifference they evince towards me will gradually wear away; I will seek to become intimate with three or four of the leaders amongst men of my own standing; do as they do; keep horses; get a hunting-box; start a yacht; attend the races; and secure to myself the best society, and a standing which, when once gained, is gained for ever. Charlotte and Sophia will soon be married; my Clapham Hall expenditure I shall cut down, if not give up entirely; take a house at the West End of the town; and divide my time between London and the shooting-box, and perhaps some little marine cottage or other, in the Isle of Wight or in the west of England. I get sick of Bath. A few weeks more will be quite sufficient, and the frequent journeys will fatigue and harass me."

These were Sir Edward's plans. The first time he walked to the Carlton, Montague accompanied him. He admired everything he

saw; praised everything he tasted; and, through Montague, formed an acquaintance the very first day with Colonel Marchton.

The colonel was a man of great resolution and of warm and sanguine temperament. He was averse to all half measures; hated all delays; could not submit to anything like compromise; advocated all extreme points; and never brooked the slightest mark of incredulity, on the part of any one, in even his most extravagant statements. — And whose statements could be as extravagant as those of the colonel? He always saw hundreds where there were units; always spoke of thousands and tens of thousands where there were hundreds; and had the greatest possible horror of men who took a great deal of pains to be accurate in their calculations and mathematical in their measurements. The colonel saw all *en grande.* "The duke had won ten thousand battles, not nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine; no; but ten thousand!" Sir Robert was "THE ablest practical statesman that had ever lived!" not one of the ablest, but "the" ablest, and no mistake! There had never been one honest Whig! — Never! He totally denied that one honest Whig had ever breathed; and insisted that it was impossible one ever could. As

to Radical Reformers, he would not prosecute them, or imprison them, or even hang them; but "cut them up in pieces, as a cook would prepare mince-meat." All Whigs were deists, and all Radicals were atheists. Not one exception had the pages of history or biography ever presented to this rule. The people were *canaille;* the manufacturers were selfish and unprincipled revolutionists; the advocates of free trade were characterless dunces; the friends of reduced standing armies and diminished taxation were traitors, who wished to sell the country to foreign powers. Those who desired to change in any one place any portion of the existing electoral system, were robbers, who would not scruple to sack a widow's house and rob church sacramental plate. Dissenters and regicides he regarded as synonymous terms. Methodists were fanatics. Presbyterians were ill-informed Jacobins. The church was supported, he declared, by nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand in the country. England was the wisest, wealthiest, happiest land under heaven; not only that ever had existed, or that did exist, but likewise that ever would exist to the end of time. Every one who did not belong to the Carlton, was a dolt, an idiot, a beggar, or a weathercock. He

would always take the long odds upon every subject, from the trotting pace of a maggot on a mahogany table, to the favourite for the great St. Leger. He loved contradiction, not that he was cross-grained or ill-tempered, but because he could not tolerate smooth waters, a quiet passage, or an unruffled stream. Paradoxes he adored; and the more absurd they seemed to others, the dearer they were to himself. He would always bet fifty against one that the next comet would destroy the world; or that the Thames would be frozen over at London Bridge on the next Christmas-day; or that there would be war with Europe before six months; or that Ireland would be occupied militarily in the course of the next summer. He knew but little of the public funds, but he hated the variations of one-eighth or one-fourth per cent., and would teaze and torment the lovers of high prices, by betting for a fall of three, four, or five per cent. in the course of the year. His moral vision was of an extraordinary character. He could not see any object with his mind's-eye through a natural or an ordinary medium. It was not that he exaggerated to others either from a love of the marvellous, from a habit of lying, or from a desire to excite mirth or surprise; but he believed,

at the moment, all he said to be true, but without stopping to examine whether it was so or not. If any one said to him that a great fluctuation in the funds might seriously affect the credit and the resources of a certain European banking establishment, he would so exaggerate the danger to himself, that he would caution every one with whom he came in contact, against placing their funds in that house. All whom he knew and liked, he would swear by under all circumstances, and let what would transpire unfavourable to them. The vote by ballot, he called a mean, sneaking, cowardly, paltry, shuffling, un-English mode of acting. Short Parliaments he denounced as chandler-shop expedients to ruin the lords of the soil, by bringing about frequent elections in counties, and thus rendering them unable to contest for any long period, with those who resorted to agitation and democracy to secure their return. Economy in the expenditure of the public money, he represented as the commencement of an attempt to establish what were called cheap governments, but which really meant republican institutions. Flogging in the army was not sufficiently often resorted to; and it alone could save that army from revolt.

These were some of his statements and a few

of his opinions. His adjectives were never positive or comparative, but uniformly superlative. Some laughed at him, others plagued him, many placed themselves under his banner, not that they concurred with him in all his statements, or were prepared to defend one-half of his allegations, but simply because he was vehement, impassioned, and eloquent; and would at any time come to the aid of any one who was attacked or contradicted by a third party; whilst others looked on,—heard all,—said nothing,—and enjoyed the fun. He was rich,—a bachelor,—lived freely,—and spent a vast deal of money, but yet was never in debt. It was not that he was an economist or a calculator, but his enjoyments were principally political; his tastes, though decidedly cheerful and gay, only conducted him to a moderate expenditure, and he had personally no love of display or expense.

The colonel was an incessant talker. He spoke upon every subject. Few were the opinions of others which he *wholly* adopted, for he had no confidence in the *whole* of any one's opinion but his own.

"Who can ask another man for his opinion," he would inquire, "but he who has no opinion of his own? Ask a man for facts;—yes.

But how 'monstrous' it is to ask him for his *opinion* upon them."

He had the habit, so much approved of by tailors and valets, of pulling the buttons or tearing the button-holes of all with whom he conversed; and would never let go of the one, or the other, until he had done some mischief.

When Charles X. dissolved the French Chamber of Deputies, reproving Royer Collard for the "insolent address," Colonel Marchton wept with joy. "That 's something like a King," said the colonel; "that 's the way to serve these scamps everywhere. Now if the electoral colleges shall dare to return the same men,— the same two hundred and twenty-one to vote another insolent address, the King has nothing to do, but to dissolve again, and levy taxes by virtue of an order in council." He would have subscribed willingly 500*l.* to hang the great O'—— by acclamation, and would have had the rope gilt afterwards and studded with diamonds, and then deposited with the regalia. His most withering anathemas he, however, reserved for the enemies of the church. Not that he ever went to church at home or abroad, in London or the country; but he would cut the tongues out, — to make use of his own strong language, — of any of his ser-

vants, or even tenants, who dared to absent themselves from church more than once a Sunday. He was nevertheless a good master, a kind and indulgent landlord, and a very feeling man towards all who sued for his protection or looked up to him for aid; that is to say, provided they were active or passive Tories; hated Dissenters and Methodists more than Papists.

He was a good scholar, was the descendant of an old and venerated family in the country, and supported all the charities of his county; but he was passionately fond of London, and resided eight months out of every twelve in the metropolis. On the 15th of August each year, — never mind the day of the week, his health, the weather, or anything else,— off he started for Leicestershire; and, strange to say, on the 15th of December he turned back again to London.

"I am glad to find you are enthusiastic in your attachment to the church and church principles," said the colonel to Sir Edward; "since the passing of that Protestant Abolition Bill, through the efforts of the Duke and Sir Robert, the church cannot afford to lose one friend. It is a struggle of life and death now. I give the church ten years more existence, provided no mighty convulsions or revolutions shall take

place; but, should France take the lead in the path which conducts to anarchy and republicanism, the church may not exist ten months."

Sir Edward thought this was a bold and terrible prophecy; but then, here was a veteran in politics, whereas he was only a stripling.

"I hope she has a longer life than that," replied Sir Edward; "but still, I am of opinion that all her friends should be much more zealous and active in her behalf."

"I will bet not only my own present fortune, but all the fortunes I may inherit from now to the end of my being, against a bottle of claret," said the colonel, "that if the Whigs come to power they will attack the church within a month afterwards. They are all deists, infidels, atheists, or papists. They have long had, ever since they first sprung up to the present time, a hatred to the Church of England. Dissenters, Methodists, Jews, Romanists, all are preferred by them to Episcopalians. We shall have to fight a desperate battle before long, and I am glad to find we have one more soldier in our camp in the person of Sir Edward Clapperton. We must give a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether."

Sir Edward became enamoured of his new friend. When he lost at play, he did so with so

much of "good humour" and of "gentlemanly feeling." When he spoke of a friend, he praised him in no faint or damning eulogies, but depicted him in the most striking and lively colours. When he attempted any description, whether of natural or artificial objects, he sketched with a bold hand, and delighted Sir Edward with his graphical powers.

Colonel Marchton was a great friend of Montague's, but he did not attempt to conceal his aversion to Lord Swainton. His aversion was not founded on any personal pique, quarrel, or animosity, nor on anything which concerned his lordship's private character, but simply on his political tergiversations. "We cannot trust Swainton out of our sight for a moment," observed the colonel. "To-day he is a Tory and a Protestant; to-morrow he may be a Whig and a deist, and the day after a Radical and atheist. Swainton has no fixed political principles; and we therefore all cut him. He would have been a candidate for admission here, but he was given to understand that if he pressed his candidateship forward, he would be rejected; so he wisely took the hint and his friends did not bring him forward. Swainton is one of the cleverest men I know, but he was not brought up to be a peer of the realm, and his title is

due to a series of extraordinary good luck, owing to the death one after the other of all the members of his family who would have stood in the way of his success."

Colonel Marchton soon laid hold of the mind and convictions of Sir Edward. His bold, uncompromising opinions and statements staggered the M. P. for Warnstable, not by their vast learning or eloquence, but by their novelty and decision. He saw too that the younger branches of the club were influenced by what might be termed his audacity, and that he had the same power over them that a general has over the troops he leads on from victory to victory. Though he was sometimes decidedly wrong in his predictions, he was generally very right, and for this obvious reason, that he backed the folly against the wisdom of man, and relied on the triumph of absurdity and extravagance, over prudence and foresight. Of course his paradoxical views and wagers are not referred to —but ordinarily he expected what took place, because he formed a low estimate of public men and public measures. The colonel was a member of the House of Commons for a Tory borough. He hitherto represented himself, his own property, opinions, family, and so forth, but his constituents were not very numerous,

and he paid too little attention to their opinions.

"What should a set of ignorant, hereditary dunces, resembling the parent cabbage-stalks which grow in their gardens, know about politics?" was one of his saucy inquiries, when he was joked about his free and independent electors. "They are electors," he would say, "just as the old cabbage stalks remain in the ground, though many a cabbage and sprout has been cut from it. They remain electors by name—as the stalk is still called a cabbage. This is perfectly right; always respect vested interests. But what can they know about politics? The beauty and the perfection of the electoral system in England is this, that it has the appearance of a general representation, and yet in fact only really represents the property of the country. It is preposterous to talk of representing the talents of the country. Have not gipsies a vast deal of peculiar and clan-like talent?—and yet who would propose that gipsies should become electors?"

Sir Edward Clapperton had neither the desire nor the talent to examine, sift, or reply to any of these opinions. He had never heard them stated so broadly before, and they amused and occupied him. This was to him a new

view of aristocratic opinions, and he liked to feel that *he* was one of those who had his serfs or his dependents. They were few, it was true, and he would not have dared to broach such opinions at Warnstable; but still it was gratifying to his vanity to feel that he was now one of the privileged classes, could look down from the high eminence on which he was placed, upon the inferior grades of society, and could know that he was one of the six hundred and fifty-eight who legislated for the world:—"For those who legislate for England," said Colonel Marchton, "legislate for the world. France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, all look up to England; and English legislation has a sensible and immense influence over the whole earth."—This was one of the opinions of the colonel that gave most satisfaction to Sir Edward.

Whilst Sir Edward was thus occupied at his club, he did not forget his parliamentary duties. The Committee on the Inclosure Bill met. Lord Calcerton (a lord *par complaisance*) was furious against the "proposers and abettors of this system of robbery." He talked loudly before business commenced — moved that Sir Edward Clapperton do take the chair — and then he assured the honourable member for Warnstable that he had been imposed upon—

that he must permit one who had had some experience in these matters to assure him that a more unprincipled job had never disgraced the committee-rooms of the House of Commons —and that he should be sorry to see the name of Sir Edward Clapperton, attached at so early a period of his parliamentary life, to so enormous a piece of injustice and oppression.

Sir Edward was nervous and uncomfortable; but Mr. Smart, the attorney for the Bill, was not so easily intimidated. He applied that counsel should be heard for the Bill, and that evidence should be called. Sir Edward "thought that the request was a fair one," but Lord Calcerton opposed it. He said, "that personally it was a matter of very little moment to him, but that on principle he should give to this measure his most vigorous opposition." What this "principle" was, he took some pains to conceal, and finally moved that strangers leave the room. When this measure was carried, Lord Calcerton could speak with freedom. He said "that there were sometimes occasions that the interference of the public press was injurious, and never more so than when it reported proceedings which were after all of a private character. An Inclosure Bill was generally more or less of this nature. He was lord

of the manor. His interests had not been adequately protected—and his losses had not been sufficiently compensated for. The Committee would, he hoped, take his word for the truth of this statement, and make a signal example in this case, which example would be useful to hundreds of such cases in future times. He hoped the Committee would throw out the Bill altogether, on the ground that the preamble had not been proved, and that the consent of the necessary parties had not been obtained."

All the members were silent except Mr. Morehouse. He was a reformer. Young, ardent, averse to everything in the shape of jobbing, and anxious to signalize himself as an enemy to corruption, he invariably attended all public Committee-meetings where he thought his vote and his voice might be useful to the popular party, and never failed to be present at those private committees of which he was specially a member.

Mr. Smart had confided to Mr. Morehouse copies of the various papers which he had entrusted to Sir Edward, and soon after Lord Calcerton had terminated his speech, Mr. Morehouse called upon the chairman to produce the originals.

Sir Edward read with a hesitating and trem-

bling voice the various documents entrusted to his care, without offering more than one or two observations in their favour. He was too nervous to make a long address.

Mr. Morehouse then rose. He said, "that after the documents they had just heard read, and which had been prepared at the desire and by the instigation of their honourable chairman, his task was easy, and that of the Committee could not be difficult. He was surprised at the course which had been taken by his honourable friend (if he would allow him to call him so) Lord Calcerton, since on all occasions in public life he espoused what was called the popular cause and protected popular interests. How came it then to pass that, in the case of this Inclosure Bill, Lord Calcerton saw with such very different eyes to those with which he was ordinarily accustomed to do on general subjects? He would tell them. Lord Calcerton's interests had warped his judgment, and had led him to take a partial and erroneous view of the whole question. This was unfortunately the case with all of us, and with the best of men. When our private interests clashed with our duties to the public, the latter were almost invariably sacrificed to the former; but, fortunately, this was a court of appeal.

Here the interests of Lord Calcerton must remain in abeyance to those of a larger and more important number; and whilst justice should be done to his lordship, justice must likewise be done to the promoters of this bill. It had been proved to them by the documents produced, that the surrounding landowners, with the sole exception of his lordship, were in favour of the measure; that they held ten times a greater number of adjoining acres than his lordship; that his interests had been most generously guarded and respected; and that the preamble of the bill could only be disputed with closed doors and with the press excluded. He therefore moved, that the agents and counsel for the bill be called in, and that the witnesses for the bill be examined."

In vain did Lord Calcerton protest. The Committee was a mixed one. The member who had been taken ill (Sir George Binkton), and who had up to that time taken charge of the bill, had managed the preliminary proceedings, and pushed on the first and second readings most admirably,—and the Committee-room doors were now open to the press, the public, the agents, and the counsel.

Sir Edward was enchanted. His documents had won the victory, aided, indeed, by Mr.

Morehouse, and from that time Sir Edward resolved on becoming acquainted with this intrepid reformer.

The Inclosure Bill passed successfully through the Committee, — was reported to the House by Sir Edward, — and, finally, was read the third time and passed. Mr. Smart wrote long letters full of the most ardent expressions of praise and admiration to his friends at Warnstable, eulogized Sir Edward for his talent, zeal, and success; and Mr. Morehouse and Sir Edward became great friends.

Mr. Morehouse was one of those who believed that England had yet to see her revolution of 1793, as France had seen hers. This was also new language to Sir Edward Clapperton. How unlike that which he heard at the Carlton! Instead of returning to Bath in a week, he stayed over a fortnight. Mr. Morehouse became his delight. He was a striking contrast to Colonel Marchton. Sir Edward was staggered. They were evidently not both right, and yet both might be wrong. Perhaps there was a middle course; but he had no time then to find it out. He resolved that the colonel and Mr. Morehouse should meet on his return, at Clapham Hall; and he longed to listen to their mutually strong and positive declarations.

Mr. Morehouse had a friend who was not in Parliament, but who was one of his constituents. It was John Hill. His father had held for many years a valuable and important post in a public establishment. His son was his successor. He was by birth a freeman of a borough in one of the southern counties; but he had resolved on no longer exercising his franchise in a place of so much corruption and bribery. John Hill was likewise a reformer; but he was not a revolutionist. He believed that society in England must be shaken to the centre; but he thought that it might be effected by parliamentary means, and without a reign of terror, violence, or bloodshed. He had a plan for granting all common lands in future to the people; another for abolishing the national debt; a third for discouraging marriage on the part of the poor without attempting to prohibit it altogether; and a fourth for intellectualising the mass, and raising them by practical philosophy from the contemplation of their animal miseries to the enjoyment of science and knowledge. These plans looked delightful on paper; and some of his friends called him a public benefactor. He was young, ardent, dogmatic, convinced of the necessity as well as certainty of a social revolution in England, and was not

unknown to the affiliated political societies of France, Italy, and Germany. Mr. Morehouse and John Hill soon mystified Sir Edward. At the end of the fortnight he remained in London, his mind was in the midst of an inextricable labyrinth; and he returned to Bath more from a sense of duty than from positive inclination.

Lord Swainton had returned before him, and had been most assiduous in his attentions to Miss Charlotte. Montague still remained in town. Lord Swainton had enabled him by a prompt advance of money to make the most satisfactory arrangements with his private and play creditors; and he was for once in his life a free man. He learnt with some regret from Sir Edward that he had resolved on curtailing by a week or two the residence of himself and his sisters in Bath, and that by the 1st or 2nd of March he proposed they should come to London. Clapham was a most inconvenient distance for everybody, and especially for a lover. Three-penny post letters were by no means picturesque in love-making. When mountains separate or seas divide, then the postman and the post-office appeared to be the natural mediums for the conveying of Cupid's missives; but love's darts to be carried by two-

penny postmen was neither tasteful nor decorous. He had hoped, on the contrary, that the season for love-making might have been the season at Bath, and that Sir Edward might have even protracted his stay there until April or May. In all this he was mistaken; but he loved Sir Edward too well to seek to influence the Miss Clappertons against his decision.

At length Sir Edward, accompanied by Montague and young Catherwood, returned to Milsom Street. Although almost daily letters had passed between himself and his sisters, Sir Edward had still much to learn. Macfarlane he had not seen whilst in town. What was the state of the negociations between himself and Lucy? Was Charlotte as ardent an admirer of Lord Swainton now as when she accepted his offer in Bristol cathedral? Was Lady Muchberry as resolved as ever to thrust the swan-like Lady Charlotte Dowling upon himself? Was Lord Swainton still determined that, *coûte qui coûte*, Lady Arabella should become Lady Clapperton? And was Sophia still the ardent admirer of Montague as "the most finished gentleman in Europe?" These were subjects he had only occasionally referred to during the last sixteen days; but as he was returning to

Bath, they reassumed all their former gravity and interest.

As for himself, he felt that he had become a political character, — that he had only taken the first step in his career, — and that he must soon make up his mind to some fixed and decisive principles. He was not satisfied with being a Tory, because Tories were respectable and influential, or because they were Churchmen and landowners; but yet he could not feel the interest Mr. Morehouse did in the "coming revolution," nor look forward with pleasure to the partition of Clapham Hall. As to Mr. Hill's theories, they were but theories after all, and yet "something must be done;" but what that something was, he had not decided on, when once more he arrived in good health and excellent spirits in Milsom Street.

CHAPTER V.

And next to him malicious Envy rode,
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Between his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his jaw.

SPENCER.

This wretched brain gave way.

MOORE.

LADY MUCHBERRY perceived, during the absence of Sir Edward Clapperton in London, that Mrs. Catherwood exercised great influence over the minds of his sisters. They confessed that they often felt the want of her counsels, or of some one, at least, who should stand to them in the relation of a confidential adviser, and wise and sincere friend. Mrs. Catherwood was by no means the sort of woman to be tolerated, under ordinary circumstances, by Lady Muchberry. She belonged to another great division of society, — not to a different section of the same society, — but to a totally different society altogether. Mrs. Catherwood was a well-

educated gentlewoman, but her husband was a merchant; and though no one could be more respectable, none could be less fashionable; not that she despised fashion, or affected contempt for classes to which she did not belong,—but her sphere was far removed from that to which the Miss Clappertons had desired to be introduced,—and she had neither a wish nor intention to follow their example. If ever the thought, in past years, had crossed her mind, that Edward Clapperton might, some day or other, perhaps, make an admirable husband for Maria, that thought had never returned, no, not even for a second, since he had succeeded to his title: and now that he was a member of Parliament, belonged to the Carlton Club, and was a companion of political men and fashionable loungers, much as she loved him for his own virtues and unaffected goodness of heart, she would have been opposed to a marriage of Maria with him, since she wished to see her daughter move in a circle more adapted to her education, and more in harmony with those quiet and domestic tastes which both Mrs. Catherwood and Maria had cultivated with special care.

Lady Muchberry had observed that Mrs. Catherwood and Maria had, on several occa-

sions, asked, as a favour, to be allowed to remain at home in Milsom Street, when the Miss Clappertons accepted invitations to her house and to Lord Swainton's; and that her young friend, Lady Charlotte Dowling, was with them a most special favourite. She had also observed that Mrs. Catherwood could with difficulty conceal her aversion to the love of display of Lady Arabella; and that whenever Lady Charlotte Dowling and Lady Arabella were mentioned at the same time, Mrs. Catherwood had eulogiums for the one and silence for the other. She was too kind to censure, and too amiable to express opinions which might give others offence, except, indeed, when she considered it her duty to enter a protest against anything she considered as decidedly improper.

Lady Muchberry having resolved, if possible, on seeking, through others, to persuade Miss Clapperton that her proposed marriage with Lord Swainton would be most absurd; at the same time on supplanting Lady Arabella, by Lady Charlotte Dowling, in the affections or admiration of Sir Edward; decided on making a dead set at Mrs. Catherwood, and on prevailing upon her to use her influence with the one to shake off her aged lover, and at the same

time to induce Sir Edward to make an offer of marriage to Lady Charlotte.

"I should like to have a long talk with you some morning," whispered Lady Muchberry to Mrs. Catherwood, as they sat next to each other in Sir Edward's box at the Bath theatre. "I have deeply at heart the interests of these dear girls. I know you have great and deserved influence with the family. It is a very delicate subject; but —— I will say no more now. Let me see you as soon as you can. Favour me with a call. We will have a long talk together."

Mrs. Catherwood was as curious as most other persons: and who would not have been anxious to know what Lady Muchberry had to say after such an intimation? So, the next day, about three o'clock, the Miss Clappertons' carriage took her to Lady Muchberry's house, and her ladyship received her with open arms.

"My dear madam!" she said, — "allow me to call you so, — I am really quite touched by this proof of your affection for the Miss Clappertons. I have long observed their love for you and for your exquisite daughter, and I am by no means surprised at their confidence and esteem."

"Oh, I love them dearly," interrupted Mrs. Catherwood; "I look on them as my own children. There is nothing I would not do for them, to save them from evil or to secure them any real good. My dear girl has always regarded them as her sisters."

"Well, then, what do you think of the proposed marriage of Charlotte with Lord Swainton?"

"She knows my opinion," replied Mrs. Catherwood; "but she feels that she is pledged too deeply to retrace her steps."

"Then she knows all?" asked Lady Muchberry, with a look of great anxiety.

"She knows his age,—his extreme love of society,—his wholly anti-domestic life,—the numerous family of children, all older than herself, who will watch every action, and view her with jealousy or hatred; but then he is so fascinating in his conversation, so lively and agreeable in his manners, so witty, so wealthy, so polite, attentive, and amiable to her, and she has so great a desire to move in the circles of fashion and gaiety, which you grace so well, my lady, that ——"

"That she will marry a madman!" interrupted Lady Muchberry.

"A madman!" exclaimed Mrs. Catherwood

"Why, what do you mean, my lady? — not really mad?"

"Really mad," replied her ladyship; "so far really mad that he was once confined in a private asylum in Kent, for upwards of six months, and ran away from his keepers; and afterwards was in confinement at Paris; besides which, his father died mad, and his grandfather was subject to epileptic attacks, which at last reduced him to a state bordering on imbecility."

"You amaze me!" exclaimed Mrs. Catherwood. "I know Charlotte well. She has an ingenuous and delightful character. I do not believe she would have concealed this from me; but certain it is that she has never referred to it. If she is acquainted with these facts, and still persists in her intentions, I can have nothing more to say respecting it; but, at least, I must ascertain whether she is ignorant. How long ago was it since his lordship was confined in a lunatic establishment?"

"About eighteen years since, for the first time," replied Lady Muchberry; "but about ten years since, some indications of its return were observed, and Scrope got him abroad to Paris, where he was treated with great care and mildness, and soon came round again. But the fact of madness is there; and his eldest

daughter, Lady Dorothy, is never seen by any but some poor relatives, who take care of her, she is so 'highly nervous,' says her father and sisters; but in plain truth, is silly."

"I presume your ladyship is quite assured as to the accuracy of these statements, and that you do not merely repeat them from the reports or *on dits* of others?" said Mrs. Catherwood, with great and most sincere earnestness.

"I am as certain of their accuracy as I am of my own existence, Mrs. Catherwood; but how to make the Miss Clappertons acquainted with the facts, is the real difficulty. I would not have my name brought upon the *tapis* for worlds of gold and silver, diamonds and pearls; and yet I put it to you, is it right that these facts should be kept from one who is so interested in knowing them? Suppose, for all things are possible, that Miss Clapperton should have children, and ——"

"Oh it is too horrible to think of," replied Mrs. Catherwood with great emotion. "If your ladyship will make me acquainted with the name of the establishments in Kent and in Paris, in which his lordship has been placed at two different periods, and what were then his names and titles, I will take care that at least Sir Edward, who is Charlotte's brother and na-

tural protector, since the death of her father, shall be made acquainted with all the facts of the case. You will not then be suspected of having made known this melancholy circumstance, and I shall do my duty without being looked on as the cause of any change, should a change take place. As Sir Edward has remained some time longer in London than his sisters expected, they will at once think, on being informed by him of the circumstance, that he has learned the news there — and I am satisfied they would pay more attention to anything coming from him than from any other person."

Lady Muchberry supplied Mrs. Catherwood with the information she desired, but not without again and again impressing on her mind that in no case whatever must her name be mentioned, not even confidentially, to Sir Edward. Mrs. Catherwood assured her ladyship that the most perfect silence should be maintained by her as to the name of her informant, and that she need not be under the slightest apprehensions that it would ever transpire.

"And what is your opinion of the Honourable Felix Montague's marriage with Sophia?" asked Mrs. Catherwood. "I hope his family is free from the same awful malady."

"Yes, wholly so," replied her ladyship, "but

of course you know that his lungs are delicate?"

"I had my suspicions," said Mrs. Catherwood, "from the very first time I saw him, and I intimated something of the kind to Sophia; but I found her so decidedly averse to anything approaching to even a surmise against him, though he is in no way morally to blame, but is on the contrary a subject for pity, that I determined to say no more on that topic. Sophia replied, 'Oh my dear Mrs. Catherwood any one can see what he is — but if he were a leper like Lazarus I would marry him to-morrow.'"

"In that case," replied Lady Muchberry, "it is useless to say another word. His first wife,"—

"His first *what?*" asked Mrs. Catherwood. "Did you say his first wife?"

"To be sure I did," answered Lady Muchberry, in the tone of one who affected to believe that they all knew he was a widower.

"I do not think Sophia is aware of that, at any rate," retorted Mrs. Catherwood; "but what of his first wife, my lady?"

"She lost a lovely girl thirteen years of age, who died of consumption, the disorder of her father's family, and the mother soon after fol-

lowed her child to the grave. It broke her heart. Montague at that time was a sad wild fellow, — but I am told he is now reformed."

"I am greatly embarrassed to know how to communicate this to Sir Edward," said Mrs. Catherwood, "for to tell Sophia will I think be useless. I should fully expect for a reply, 'I do not care if he has had a hundred wives, if they are all dead;' so enamoured is she of her lover."

"And he is a most agreeable gentlemanly fellow I assure you," replied Lady Muchberry. "I consider the marriage of Montague with Sophia, much less objectionable than that of Charlotte with Lord Swainton."

"I am not of your opinion, my lady," said Mrs. Catherwood: "it is not very probable, though it is possible, that the madness of his lordship will descend to another generation; but Sophia may live to witness similar catastrophes to that which caused the death of the first wife of Sir Felix Montague. The whole however appears to me to be most frightful, but I should be glad if the case of Sir Felix were entrusted to other hands. Besides which, Sophia would call out, 'new calumnies, new anonymous letters;' and as his recent conduct in the duel with Lord Nonpareil has stamped

him in the Clapperton family as a most honourable and noble fellow, nothing short of official proofs would satisfy them that he had ever been married, or had lost a child from so deplorable a disorder."

"Proofs would not be difficult," said Lady Muchberry. "The medical men who attended his daughter are both living near Grafton Street, London; the marriage of Montague with Miss Sidewell was celebrated at Marylebone Church, and in the church-yard at Scarborough is a monument (at least so I am told) erected over the grave both of mother and daughter. But Lord Lyttenworth knows all about it, and can give every particular."

Two days afterwards, indeed on the day previous to the arrival of Sir Edward, Montague, and young Catherwood at Bath, Mrs. Catherwood was in possession of all the facts, either to make use of them, or not, as she should deem most wise and prudent.

Lord Swainton on his return to Bath, several days prior to Sir Edward, spent most of his time with the Miss Clappertons and their agreeable circle. To Charlotte he confided the secret of his ardent desire that Lady Arabella should become Lady Clapperton.

"I would give half my fortune, and indeed

nearly all I possess in the world, except your love and your heart," said his lordship to Charlotte, "to see Sir Edward married to Arabella. Age, fortune, tastes, views, opinions,—all harmonize. They would be the happiest of the happiest, the gayest of the gayest, the brightest of the brightest. Beggars description!"

Charlotte did not attempt to conceal that she held a contrary opinion. She assured him that he had mistaken Edward's character, if his lordship supposed that he was as fond of gaiety and society as Lady Arabella. So far from this being the case, they had always had some difficulty, both before and since the death of their mother, to induce him to mix much in the world; and although since they had known his lordship, her brother had been exceedingly gay, she was convinced that if he had brought them out at Bath alone, without his lordship's protection and advice, they would have been remarkably quiet, and would have confined their gaieties to the theatre and the public rooms. She thought that Edward was innately a steady, quiet man, and had no very great love of the world. At the same time she admitted that he was easily led, and that Lady Arabella might induce him to become more fond of visiting and dissipation, than he had yet been.

"She would make him gay as a butterfly, lively as a lark," observed Lord Swainton; "inspire him with new tastes, point out to him new pursuits, aid him in his party politics, stir him up to life and action, set him about doing something to distinguish himself, make him the centre or focus of a system, change him into a public benefactor, and render him the happiest of the happy. Beggars description!"

Charlotte was always obliged to take breath before she replied to one of these Swainton chains or running gamuts of adjectives and superlatives; and this she did on the present occasion.

"I do not think that Edward would suit Lady Arabella," said Charlotte. "She should have such a man as Lord Clinemouth, a man fond of gaiety, devoted to music, to the opera, to dancing, to every species of amusement. She should have a large establishment in Grosvenor-square, be the goddess of a splendid and devoted circle of friends and acquaintances, should be at the top of the *haut ton*, like yourself; and this she could never be with dear Edward for her husband. Besides, though his fortune is large it is not adequate to such a constant expenditure. When our fortunes are

taken from his, he will not have more, even including the Maplestone property, than 8000*l.* a-year, and I am told that is nothing at all for a man who keeps the best society in London — at least, when he is married."

"It is little enough indeed," replied his lordship; "but if I added 2000*l.* a-year to it, or even 3000*l.*, for that sum they might live in splendour, though, of course, not at Clapham Hall. It is the best match for him that he can possibly make, especially as he has taken his place with the Tory party; for, what would his party say to him if he married, for instance, the daughter of Lord Dowling, than whom a more out-and-out Whig cannot be found on the face of the earth; a man who has said the strongest and the most bitter things against the union of Church and State, ever yet uttered by the most implacable enemies of that union. Sir Edward must have a fine woman, a captivating woman, and a leading woman, and one who will assist him by her counsels and inspirit him with her fire. But he must have even much more than all this; he must have a woman belonging to a family long known in the ranks of the Tory party, and whose protection and support will at once cause him to be viewed with a favourable eye by those with whom he desires

to associate. In fact, Arabella is just the woman for him; and I hope you will tell him so."

Charlotte was still unconvinced; and much as she admired Lord Swainton, she could not promise to support his views with reference to their brother and Lady Arabella.

Lord Swainton took great pains likewise with Sophia. He represented to her how desirable it would be for her to have such a woman for her sister-in-law as Arabella; of what vast importance it would be to Montague and herself to have his, Lord Swainton's, daughter, in London as their relative, to take the lead with Sir Edward in the fashionable world; and, finally, that he knew nothing would give Montague so much pleasure as to have his brother-in-law married to his, Lord Swainton's daughter.

Sophia, like her sister, was as averse to Edward marrying a woman like Lady Arabella, as they were to his thinking any more of Maria Catherwood. They had seen and conversed with, knew and esteemed, the lady whom they wished him to marry, and that person was Lady Charlotte Dowling. As to the father being a notorious Whig, they were wholly indifferent to that, and could not imagine that this circumstance would make the smallest difference in their brother's prospects or political position.

The only point which at all staggered them with respect to Lady Charlotte Dowling was, that she had no fortune until after the death of her father, and he *might* live a quarter of a century. But, then, 8000*l.* a-year with Lady Charlotte for his wife, would be more than 15,000*l.* with Lady Arabella; for the latter could not conceal her love of expense and display.

In the midst of these varied plans and discussions Lucy was pursuing her noiseless course of quiet love-making by correspondence. A few days before the return of Sir Edward she had received from her father a most affectionate and charming letter, consenting to that correspondence, but intimating that, under all circumstances, it would now be most wise and proper for her to return from Bath, and to receive the visits of Captain Macfarlane, not at the residence of her friends the Clappertons, but in her own quiet but most happy home at Clapham. Lucy's wishes were moderate; her heart fully occupied; her prospects neither brilliant nor sombre. Her wishes were all satisfied by her prospects; and Captain Macfarlane was the happiest of men. His letters breathed, throughout, the most manly but impassioned love. His plans of future life were all ratified alike by her judgment and her heart; and she waited almost

with impatience to return to her father's house that she might once more receive from the lips of her lover his assurances of devoted regard.

The arrival of Sir Edward, Montague, and young Catherwood, in Milsom Street, was greeted by all with long and loud acclamations.

Sophia received Montague with blushing joy. She could not, if she would, conceal her pleasure at his arrival; and Montague perceived with delight, that he had won her heart. He felt that it was necessary to be sure of that, before he apprised her of the fact that she was not the first being who had engaged his affections, and who had given hers in return. He had never told Lord Swainton to conceal the circumstance, but he was pretty certain that it was unknown.

Montague resolved that when the first opportunity should present itself for communicating the fact to Sophia, without doing so in a formal manner, he would avail himself of it: and the very day after his arrival at Bath that opportunity occurred.

"I cannot imagine how Charlotte can marry a *widower*," said Sophia to Montague; "even though he be as pleasant, amusing, and good-hearted as Lord Swainton. It is so terrible to be the *second-loved*."

"I am distressed beyond measure," replied Montague, "to hear you say that; for I also am a *widower*. I married young. I had an only daughter. She was exceedingly beautiful, and we idolised her. She died of consumption. We watched her month after month, night and day. Her mother's heart was broken, and she died a few months after our child. They lie both buried at Scarborough. Five years have elapsed since the last of those events; but is my heart for ever to remain without consolation, happiness, and love? Can we love but *once?*"

"No!" replied Sophia, with a voice announcing disappointment and sorrow, — "no, Montague! we can love but *once!* I wish I had never seen you!"

"Am I, then, less dear to you because another has loved me?"

"I will not answer that question," replied Sophia; "but *I* must be less dear to you. Was your wife unkind, cruel, wicked?"

"Oh, far from that," said Montague, with genuine feeling, "she was an angel. But —"

"No, no, Montague! I know what you were about to add,—'But there may be more angels than one;' or, 'But you are an angel too.' This is second-hand. Another has heard

from the same lips the same assurances, the same vows, the same oaths. I wish I never had seen you!"

"Oh, say not that!" exclaimed Montague; "I will not hold you to your pledge,— to your promise, for an instant. If you cannot love me now, as you did love me before in the honesty of my heart I made the disclosure I have done, then, cost me what it may, in the way of sacrifice of feeling and of passion, I will leave you mistress of your heart, and pray that some one more worthy than myself may become its possessor. I shall ever desire, ever pray, for your happiness; but I shall, at least, have the consolation of knowing that I did not gain your affections by false statements or unworthy concealment. If then, you cannot love me,— tell me so,—and let me know my fate."

"It is not that I cannot love you," said Sophia, "with all the energy and devotedness of first love; but you cannot so love me. You have loved already. Your first wife was an angel. Your second cannot be so. When I hear you sigh, I shall know you sigh over departed hours and happier days. When I see you weep, I shall know that your darling child, now lying in the grave, or your once beloved wife, are the objects of your tears."

"I shall not weep, I shall not sigh," said Montague. "How can I do either, with your face to cheer, your smiles to bless, and your heart to render me joyous?"

"It cannot be, — indeed it cannot!" said Sophia, in an agony of grief and disappointment. "I have always said, and all I have read has tended to confirm me in my resolution, that I would never be *second* to any one. We cannot love twice. We may respect, esteem, regard; but we cannot *love* twice. I feel that I must have all the heart,— past, present, and to come,— of the man to whom I give my affections and my hopes. I *may* have your *future* —that is a portion of it,—but all the rest has belonged to another. Your love for me will be second to that you gave to your first wife and your adored child. Montague! I respect, esteem, and love you, — but I cannot marry you! Indeed I cannot!"

Montague could not believe the announcement. When he left Milsom Street in the afternoon to proceed to the York, no one but Sophia and himself knew of her determination. What was to be done? He could not return and dine. Sophia would be agitated. He should be not less so. He resolved, therefore, on writing a note to Sir Edward, to say that

he felt indisposed, suffering, no doubt, from the wound in the recent duel, and regretted he could not join the family circle; and also on writing a long letter to Sophia, expressing to her renewed devotion and never-changing love. As Lord Swainton had introduced him to the Clappertons, he also sent a note to him, requesting him to call at the York in the course of the evening, having something to communicate to him of great importance.

It so happened that Lord Swainton and Arabella had gone that evening, without the Clappertons, to a ball, and his lordship spent an hour after dinner with Montague.

"It 's all up," said Montague, as his lordship entered the room.

"What 's up?" inquired his lordship. "Is your father dead?"

"Oh no—something worse than that," replied Montague.

"A lover's quarrel no doubt — sighing and pining — vowing and weeping — wailing and snarling; but kissing and smiling will set it all right again. Beggars description!"

"You are mistaken, Swainton," said Montague with great earnestness. "Sophia was not aware till to-day that I had ever been married. I thought I was so completely master of her

heart, and so fully possessed all her affection, that I disclosed the fact, and she vows that nothing shall induce her to marry me."

"Is that all?" asked his lordship.

"And enough too," replied Montague. "When I told her I could not return to Milsom Street unless she changed her decision, she replied, 'I am rendered unhappy for life — but I prefer unhappiness without marriage, to misery with it. *I* shall never love another. *You* can.'"

"Beggars description!" said his lordship, "but leave it to me. I will see her alone, instead of going to the ball; or I will go to the ball an hour later."

Montague told Lord Swainton that he had written her a letter, and that perhaps he had better not visit her till the next day. This was agreed on, and Montague was left to his reflections.

The dinner at the Clappertons was rather dull. Montague was absent. Sophia declined coming down, as she was sadly tormented with a "sick headach," (all guessed of course that she and Montague had had a lover's quarrel,) Charlotte was vexed that Lord Swainton had preferred a ball with Arabella, to her society. Lucy and Maria were in good spirits, as usual,

and young Catherwood was full of boyish gaiety; but Sir Edward had his mind preoccupied with a letter he had received that day from his friend Morehouse; and Mrs. Catherwood with the conversation she had held with Lady Muchberry two or three days previously, and the substance of which she had not yet disclosed to Sir Edward.

When the dessert was terminated she said to her son, "Come, my boy, *I* shall take your place to-day, and keep Sir Edward company. *You* join the ladies, and I will turn gentleman for once."

Sir Edward was enchanted. He also wished to speak to Mrs. Catherwood relative to the letter he had received from Mr. Morehouse. But what could be Mrs. Catherwood's reasons for remaining behind? He had not to wait long in suspense, for she began as follows,—

"My dear Sir Edward."

"Oh do not say Sir Edward — but plain Edward, dear Mrs. Catherwood," replied Sir Edward Clapperton.

"Well then, my dear Edward, if it must be so, I am about to treat you as I should my son; with as much frankness and affection. Do you know that Lord Swainton has been twice mad? that his father was so; and his grandfather so

affected with epilepsy as to have died almost an idiot?"

"I do," replied Sir Edward; "for I have this day received a letter from a friend of mine, who assured me in London that he thought it was the same man and family, but would not be sure. I begged him to make every inquiry. He has done so; and has sent me full particulars. I am confounded. I know not what to do. But from whom did you obtain your information?"

"I cannot possibly tell you," said Mrs. Catherwood. "I am so pledged to secresy that you must not ask me another word."

"But I have something else to annoy me. Morehouse tells me that Montague is a widower, and that he has lost an only daughter in a consumption. It is most dishonourable on his part to conceal the fact of his having before been married; and I fear that he is himself suffering from delicate health, if not diseased lungs. My situation is most embarrassing, painful, difficult. As to Lord Swainton, I am under obligations to him I can never repay; and yet how can I consent to Charlotte being united to a man who has been twice insane, and in whose family also there has been hereditary insanity. As to Sophia, I am certain

she would never have accepted Montague, in the first instance, if she knew that he had been married; what she may decide on now, I cannot tell; but perhaps she knows it. Charlotte tells me they have had a quarrel, and letters are passing to and fro between them at the present moment. I have not yet spoken to Charlotte. Shall we do so together? This is a good opportunity. As to Sophia, we will say nothing to-night to her — but let us speak to Charlotte at once."

Mrs. Catherwood agreed to take her part in this disagreeable interview, and she went to the drawing-room and whispered to Charlotte that Edward and herself wished to have a chat with her.

"My dear Charlotte," said Sir Edward, "I have shown to our kind friend Mrs. Catherwood, a letter I have received to-day from my friend Mr. Morehouse, and which, as it relates to your future happiness, she thinks with me, you ought to see without delay. At the same time I should add that, through some other channel, the very same facts contained in this letter were communicated to Mrs. Catherwood, and strange to relate, she stayed behind to make them known to me, as I had resolved to consult her respecting this letter. Do not agitate yourself;

read the letter calmly, and then let us consult together what is best to be done."

"Some more of Lord Nonpareil's impositions, I suppose," said Charlotte. "I begin to get wearied of this *beau monde*, and all about it."

"There is no question about Lord Nonpareil, or deceptions, or *beau monde*," replied Sir Edward rather briskly, "but most important and correct, though very lamentable news."

Charlotte read the letter, and then burst into tears.

Mrs. Catherwood spoke to her with great kindness and affection; and advised her well to ponder all the consequences which might result from her marrying Lord Swainton.

"I must take time for reflection," said Charlotte; "but as to Sophia and Montague, it is now all explained. He must have told Sophia that he was a widower, for she is weeping bitterly, and will say nothing in reply to all my questions, but 'I have been grossly deceived. I will never marry him!'"

"That is my impression, I confess," said Sir Edward; "I am not at all satisfied. As to Lord Swainton, it is not to be expected that a man should say, 'I have been twice insane for a few months; but many years have elapsed since I was so last, and I do not believe I shall

be ever so again.' But Montague must have known that we all thought him a bachelor; and his secreting this fact vexes me much."

The conversation was then continued for upwards of two hours; but Charlotte could not come to any decision. She was not pleased with the whole of Lord Swainton's conduct, nor disposed to second his proposal to induce Sir Edward to marry Lady Arabella; but she did not hint at this circumstance to either her brother or Mrs. Catherwood. She wished for further information as to the character of the insanity of his lordship. Perhaps he had been wholly cured. Perhaps grief had taken possession of his mind, and pressed it down too severely. Perhaps the word "insanity" was too strong. Mrs. Catherwood confirmed all that the letter of Mr. Morehouse had stated, and gave additional particulars. Still she was not satisfied,—and Sir Edward promised to write again to his friend. The day concluded gloomily. Maria, Lucy, and young Catherwood were alone exempt from the sorrows of the house; and they were but partially so, for Sophia having declined seeing any one, they feared she was really ill; and now Charlotte's eyes gave evidence of tears instead of smiles, and of sorrow instead of joy. All retired to

rest early, except Sophia in Milsom Street and Montague at the York, and they were preparing their final adieus, in the form of long and important letters.

CHAPTER VI.

Discord, a sleepless hag who never dies,
With snipe-like nose and ferret-glowing eyes,
Lean, sallow cheeks, long chin, with beard supplied,
Poor crackling joints, and wither'd parchment hide,
As if old drums, worn out with martial din,
Had clubb'd their yellow heads to form her skin.

PETER PINDAR.

SOPHIA and Montague both passed a sleepless night. The former was anxious to substantiate her statement that she was *not* fickle; whilst the latter devoted many hours to the preparation of a letter of immense length, giving a tolerably correct history of his past life. Of course that history was sketched with a friendly hand, and his failings were imputed to bad example, or to a somewhat neglected education. He reassured Sophia that his heart was wholly hers, and argued at some length the question of how far we could be said to be incapable of giving *all* our affections to a being who had not been the object of our *first* love. Undoubtedly he argued in the affirmative, and his rea-

sonings were by no means flimsy or unworthy of attention. Early in the morning Montague despatched his letter to Sophia; but before it had reached her, her own maid had conveyed to him the result of her midnight lucubrations. Her letter evinced the same firmness as those which had preceded it,—and Montague now ceased to hope that his biographical sketch and his renewed assurances of devoted regard, would influence Sophia, and lead her to revoke her decision.

Charlotte had been less affected by the intelligence relating to Lord Swainton than her brother had expected. She had, indeed, conversed at various times with Mrs. Catherwood during Sir Edward's absence in London, relative to the disparity of ages between her and his lordship, and she had not unfrequently regretted that the decision she had come to in his favour had been so hastily taken.

"My dear Charlotte," said Sir Edward, immediately after breakfast, "what are we to do about his lordship? A state of indecision relative to such a matter as this is wholly impossible. His lordship will be coming in to see us presently; rely on it, Montague has seen him about Sophia. If you have resolved on continuing his acquaintance, let us receive him

the same as usual, and invite him for this evening. If, on the contrary, you have determined not to risk all the sad consequences which your marriage with him might entail on you — why, I must face the difficulty as well as I can, and return all of us as quickly as possible to Clapham Hall."

"At any rate, I should like soon to return home," replied Charlotte; "and I know that this is Sophia's wish too; but we must remember that Colonel Dawson has not yet come to fetch Lucy, and that Mrs. Catherwood and Maria intend to remain at least another fortnight."

"When they return to London," said Sir Edward, "we will accompany them; but, in the meantime, what is to be done about Lord Swainton?"

"Let us go on as before," replied Charlotte, "until you shall hear from Mr. Morehouse. If, indeed, the attacks which he has already had were of such a nature as to be attributed fairly to constitutional or hereditary insanity, I think I owe it to myself, and to you and Sophia also, to abandon our intimacy. If, on the contrary, those attacks were accidental, or were only the results of circumstances of extraordinary excitement and anxiety which may never return again, I should prefer passing

them over in silence. You know, my dear Edward, it is a most eligible match for me. Certainly, Lord Swainton is a great deal older than I am, and there are many reasons why I should have preferred a much younger man; but, then you admit yourself, that even *you* find great difficulties in the way of getting on in the first circles, on account of our city origin; and though Lord Swainton is exceedingly eccentric, still the title he possesses is an old one, and though he has come into it in a sort of left-handed way, yet the title is *his*."

Sir Edward remarked, "Yes; but without the estates."

"I know nothing about that," replied Charlotte; "all I know is, that you told me he was very rich; and certainly the estates he has lately inherited from Lord Warminster are of themselves sufficient to make him a rich man."

"He has but little else," said Sir Edward. "I only knew that, the day before I left London, or I should have written and told you so. His former private solicitors are great friends of Morehouse, and knew all about his property."

"Morehouse! Morehouse!" replied Charlotte, in a most fretful tone; "one hears of nothing but Morehouse now. I should think he must be a very disagreeable man, constantly

mixing himself up with the affairs and concerns of others instead of attending to his own."

"That is unlike you, Charlotte," said Sir Edward: "whatever Mr. Morehouse has done has been at *my* request. His conduct has been most gentlemanly and honourable as well as friendly and kind. What I have done has been exclusively with a view to your happiness."

"I know that quite well, dear Edward," replied Charlotte; "and I love you sincerely for it; but really one does not know whom to believe or what to do in this world, and above all in this *fashionable* part of it into which we are entering. There 's Lord Swainton plaguing me to death every day about Lady Arabella and yourself. Lady Muchberry is incessantly talking about Lady Charlotte Dowling. And now here 's Montague turns out a widower after all, and Sophia is most indignant. She seems more calm this morning, and was reading just now a letter of twenty pages, at least, from Montague. I wish for my part we had never come to Bath, but remained at Clapham Hall. Certainly I am delighted you are member for Warnstable, and we owe this to Lord Swainton; but I am afraid even that distinction will give you more trouble than pleasure."

"Never mind me; and do not make yourself

uneasy about that," observed Sir Edward; "I shall get on very well; but I am anxious, most anxious, respecting you and Sophia. If I could do as I desired, you should renounce Lord Swainton, and Sophia, Montague; so strongly do I now feel that these proposed marriages will not conduce to your happiness."

"We shall see what reply your friend will make respecting the 'character' of Lord Swainton's former insanity," replied Miss Clapperton; "and with reference to Sophia and Montague, they will settle their dispute between themselves either to-day or to-morrow; for Sophia can never be unhappy long together; it is not her nature."

Lord Swainton called in as usual about noon to learn the plans for the day, and the nature of the evening's amusements.

Sophia was not visible; and his lordship evinced great anxiety to see her. Charlotte assured him that it was impossible, as she was rather indisposed, and intended to remain in her room during the day.

"Oh! I know all about it, my dear Charlotte," said his lordship. "I think Sophia acts *unjustly* towards Montague, and I wished to tell her so before it is too late."

"My sister is incapable of acting with in-

justice!" exclaimed Charlotte; "and I am surprised you should accuse her of doing so, my lord."

"I should be sorry to say anything unkind, my dear Charlotte," rejoined his lordship; "but it is a mere excuse for any one to say she cannot love a man because he has been loved before."

"That is not a fair statement of my sister's objection, my lord," replied Charlotte. "I do not concur with her in all her views; but she does not say she cannot love Montague because he has been married before; but that *he* cannot love *her* as if he had never been so married. If Sophia had known that he had been a widower, she would never have accepted him."

"It was never made a secret of," said his lordship. "I do not remember distinctly to have mentioned it myself; but I may have done so."

"Oh! never," replied Charlotte; "and Montague never alluded to it until yesterday."

"Montague is the finest fellow living," said his lordship, "and would be an invaluable prize to any woman. Sophia will not have *many* such offers."

"Sophia can have whom she will," replied Charlotte; "and, though Sir Felix is a

thorough gentleman and moves in the best circles, yet his fortune is exceedingly small; and his father, we are told, is by no means wealthy."

"Those who tell you so are deceiving you, my dear Charlotte," said his lordship. "Lord Montague is rich; and at his death Felix will become absolute master of all his estates. I want to tell Sophia that Montague is devoted to her; but that he cannot be trifled with. If she has been fickle enough to change her mind, and has fallen in love with some one else, she should say so at once, and not impute to him the blame which belongs only to herself."

"Sophia is incapable of dissimulation, my lord," replied Charlotte with great warmth, and rising hastily left the room.

"They are all mad together," said his lordship to himself, as Charlotte shut the door, — "decidedly mad — stark, staring mad. These city girls have no manners, — know nothing of the world, — cannot bear the rules and ceremonies of good life; — they must be tamed. I shall leave them for the day to their own reflections. Sir Edward will be greatly annoyed, I fear, by their folly. No doubt they have not said a word to him."

Lord Swainton waited a few minutes in the

breakfast-parlour, where he had been conversing with Charlotte, to see if she returned; but, finding himself alone, he left the house, first of all desiring the valet to present his kind regards to his master.

Mrs. Catherwood was the first to be informed by Charlotte of the conversation which had taken place between herself and Lord Swainton. She disapproved of his want of delicacy in conferring with Charlotte on the subject in question, and, above all, in such a style; and she expressed this opinion to Miss Clapperton.

"Oh! he was quite in a passion, I assure you," said Charlotte. "I was quite frightened, and left the room."

Mrs. Catherwood regretted that Miss Clapperton had exhibited want of courtesy, and lamented that she should have forgotten that she was in her own house, and that Lord Swainton was, momentarily at least, her guest.

"Then he will not be so any more," replied Charlotte. "I am quite tired of all that has been going on the last ten days, and I will receive him no more."

"Come to no hasty conclusion, my dear Charlotte," said Mrs. Catherwood; "there are different points of view from which most questions are to be regarded; and it is not because

Lord Swainton thinks Sophia open to the charge of fickleness that you should cease to respect or esteem him."

"But it is why I should not love him," replied Charlotte; "and I am now quite satisfied, from his odd looks to-day when he was vexed about Montague and Sophia, that madness is still latent in his family and himself, and may burst forth some day or other when I may be most defenceless and least prepared to meet it."

Sophia and Charlotte spent the day together, with Mrs. Catherwood. They talked hour after hour about the past, the present, and the future; and Charlotte finally resolved to break off her connection with Lord Swainton.

"That will amount to my terminating mine with Montague," said Sophia; "for I am sure he would espouse the cause of Lord Swainton, and then we should quarrel. I shall write a final letter to him, and inform him that after much serious consideration of his long letter of this morning, I have come to the resolution of adhering to the decision I took yesterday."

Sir Edward was so annoyed by all the discussions and conversations of the two last days, that he had set off to Clifton with George Catherwood, and did not return until the evening. Mrs. Catherwood then made him acquainted

with the resolutions of his sisters, and expressed her hope that he would see Lord Swainton the next morning, and explain to him the determination of Charlotte.

"She should explain that herself," replied Sir Edward. "I have no objection to see his lordship afterwards, since I am under too many obligations to him to act cavalierly; but love affairs and lovers' quarrels belong, I think, to the parties interested."

"I think so too," said Mrs. Catherwood; "Charlotte shall write and explain her views and decision before you call."

Charlotte was at first averse to this line of proceeding; but she yielded to the counsels of Mrs. Catherwood, and addressed the following letter to Lord Swainton:—

"My Lord,

"I have felt for some time past, most forcibly, the great disparity which exists between our ages; but, as that circumstance was well known to me when I accepted your offer of marriage, I should never have referred to it had I not been convinced, from the observations you made to-day relative to my sister, that there is a still greater disparity of views than even of age. No doubt my views of society are contracted, and my

principles want the stamp of fashion to render them acceptable; but I should be sorry to see the Honourable Felix Montague my brother-in-law, and I must decline in the most decided manner becoming your wife. With respect to the conduct of your friend, I leave Sophia to do justice to her own sentiments and heart; but whilst I shall ever feel grateful to you for the kindness you have shown to my brother, I cannot consent to marry a man whose views of what is just and proper differ so very much from what I consider correct and true. I am well aware that you, my lord, will feel no difficulty in winning the affections of some one more suited to your age, station, and opinions: and with every wish for your future happiness, I therefore remain,

"My lord,

"Yours sincerely,

"CHARLOTTE CLAPPERTON."

"Mad — mad — mad — as mad as they say I was once!" said Lord Swainton, as he threw down Charlotte's letter on the breakfast-table, and then directed Arabella to read it.

"Poor things!" exclaimed Lady Arabella; "this comes of having anything to say to such half-educated people as the Clappertons. Oh!

this is really too good a joke. Miss Clapperton, the daughter of a Cheapside goldsmith, refuses to marry Lord Swainton of Swainton, one of the oldest family titles in the united kingdom. Poor Sir Edward! I pity *him*. He must be dreadfully tormented with such sisters as these. They must worry his life out."

"Sir Edward Clapperton is in the drawing-room," said the servant, who at this moment opened the door of the breakfast-room, in which were his lordship and Lady Arabella; "and he begged me to say that he should be happy to converse with your lordship alone."

"Very well," replied Lord Swainton; "tell Sir Edward I will be with him in five minutes."

Lord Swainton finished rapidly his breakfast, and proceeded to the drawing-room.

"I am really excessively sorry, my lord," said Sir Edward, "at the turn which affairs are taking. My sisters are, as you are aware, wholly independent of me. I cannot control them. Charlotte is so annoyed at some observations you made yesterday ——"

"Oh! I know all about it," replied Lord Swainton; "I know everything. It 's a matter of no importance. Lord Swainton of Swainton may marry a countess, a duchess, a princess, a queen, whomever he will. Miss Clapperton can-

not say the same thing, Sir Edward. If I had time and inclination to examine and probe fully this matter, I should no doubt find out other reasons than those alleged in this letter, which I have just received from your sister. Some false or exaggerated reports of former ill health, momentary insanity, or something of that sort may have been conveyed to your ears; or false statements respecting the amount of my fortune may have found their way to your and her eyes in anonymous letters. Never mind, never mind!—I ask for no disclosures. I can afford to smile at all my calumniators! Tell your sister, Sir Edward, that I have but one regret, that she should deprive herself of the rank, station, fortune, and protection offered her. For you I entertain the same feelings of respect and affection I have always had; and I had formed some plans which would have proved the truth of my assertions; but we must think of these no more. I shall be at all times most happy to see you personally, and to render you any and every aid. Montague leaves Bath to-day for London; and I shall probably follow him with my daughter as soon as the month for which I have taken this place has expired; perhaps before."

"It is right I should state, my lord," replied Sir Edward, "that the —"

"Oh, I tell you I know all about it, Sir Edward," interrupted Lord Swainton. "Beggars description! I know all about it. I suppose I'm a madman—a spendthrift—a gamester, and a hundred other things quite unworthy of becoming the husband of Miss Clapperton!"

"I did not say so," replied Sir Edward; "and I think, my lord—"

"No—no, Sir Edward," said his lordship, "think nothing at all, say nothing at all, do nothing at all, repeat nothing at all. Beggars description! You are a fine, noble-spirited young fellow; but you are sadly teazed and lamentably plagued by two whimsical sisters. It is your misfortune, not your fault; I can understand all that."

"My sisters are neither causes of uneasiness nor sorrow to me, my lord, I assure you; and I hope you will respect my feelings as—"

"Oh yes; respect everything," exclaimed his lordship: "brotherly love—parental care—fraternal affection—deep responsibility—anxiety to do your duty, &c. Beggars description!"

His lordship rose. Sir Edward did the same.

"Good morning, my lord," said Sir Edward.

"Oh, good morning, Sir Edward," replied his lordship. "Tell Charlotte she is a silly girl,

and Sophia that she is a fickle one. They have no right to put their brother into such dilemmas as these."

Sir Edward felt nettled at this last observation, and said, "I approve the conduct of my sisters, my lord, and am prepared to defend it."

"I am sorry for it, Sir Edward," replied Lord Swainton; "but it is not worth while losing one's temper about so small a matter. I have a great regard for you, and hope always to cherish it."

"I can seek for no one's friendship at the expense of disapproving of my sisters' conduct," said Sir Edward; "they are admirable persons."

"Let us say no more about it to-day," replied his lordship; "we are neither of us in the mood to discuss it coolly, and I should be sorry that at our last interview anything should be said which we might afterwards regret."

Sir Edward advanced to the door. Lord Swainton followed him.

"We shall see each other in London somewhere or other," said his lordship.

"No doubt we shall," replied Sir Edward: and the much dreaded interview was over.

Sir Edward Clapperton walked about Bath,

lounged at the libraries, read the papers, went to the pump-room, and did not return to Milsom Street before one. There, a letter awaited him. It was from Montague; and was couched in the following terms:—

"My dear Sir Edward,

"For still you must allow me to call you so, notwithstanding I leave Bath for London in a few hours not to return again to your hospitable and amiable society and dwelling. I leave to Sophia to explain to you the events of the last two days, if she has not already done so. I consider her conduct wholly unjustifiable, and I cannot but think that you will entertain the same opinion. The best proof I can offer that I had no intention to deceive her as to my past life, was, that I was the first to announce to her the fact of my having been previously married. I had surely the right to select my own time and manner for making the announcement, and I did so in the teeth of her own observation, that she was surprised her sister should marry a widower. Whilst, however, I deeply deplore her conduct, I feel it would be most unjust to charge any part of it on you, and I shall never cease to feel for you the most sincere respect

and regard. Your happiness will be always desired by,

" My dear Sir Edward,

" Yours faithfully,

" F. MONTAGUE."

" This is the most extraordinary termination of two love matches I ever heard or read of in my life," thought Sir Edward, as he perused and re-perused this letter. He sat down at once, and wrote a reply. In that reply he distinctly declared that he could not disapprove the conduct of Sophia; that every member of her family knew the aversion she had always expressed to marrying a widower, and her fixed resolution never to do so; that if she had not previously refused to marry him, it was because the fact of his first marriage had not been made known to her; and that the instant she had been informed of the circumstance, she had declined continuing their past intimacy. In one word, that Montague had only himself to blame for the decision which his sister had come to; but that he should always preserve a pleasing recollection of the happy hours they had passed in each other's society; and that he, Sir Edward, would at any time, and at all

times, esteem it both a duty and a privilege to be of any service to Montague.

"Sir Felix Montague was just stepping into the coach, sir," said Sir Edward's servant when he returned from the York, "as I arrived. I had time to give it to him, and only time, for a moment after the coach drove off."

"He was in a great hurry to leave," thought Sir Edward; "but, no doubt, he found the hotel dear—too dear for him, as he was not to marry. This is a specimen of the *beau monde!* of Tory lords and Tory sirs! I begin to be sick of this sort of life already; but the die is cast, and I cannot get back to quiet life again without losing my station and reputation. However, as we cannot enter into Bath gaieties on account of our mourning, and as there are but few attractions here now the Swaintons will be leaving, and Montague has left, in ten or twelve days' time we may get off; and in the interim I shall just take a run up to London for a few days, and see how they get on in that little village."

Charlotte consoled Sophia, and Sophia consoled Charlotte, whilst Lucy and Maria were furious against Lord Swainton and Montague, and Mrs. Catherwood performed the part of mitigator and assuager.

Lady Muchberry heard the next day (and what did she not hear as soon as it took place?) the results to which, as she thought, her communications to Mrs. Catherwood had *exclusively* led. She called on the Miss Clappertons. They breathed not a syllable on the subject. She asked after Montague. They replied he had gone to London. She asked how it was she did not see or hear of them the previous night at Lord Swainton's, as he had a few visiters to tea and cards? They replied that they were not very well, and did not go out. Mrs. Catherwood did not make her appearance during Lady Muchberry's call; and her ladyship had therefore only heard Lady Arabella's statement. She entreated the Miss Clappertons to favour her with their company the next evening, — "For," she said, "your great attractions, the Swaintons, will be there, and the party will not be complete without you." The Miss Clappertons "feared that their brother was engaged, and he did not like their going out without him; but they would let her ladyship know."

Lady Muchberry was quite satisfied of one thing when she left the Miss Clappertons; and that was, that although the version of the story given by Lady Arabella might not be quite

correct, the dissolution of the friendship of the Clappertons for the Swaintons, was absolute and final. Therefore Lord Swainton would not marry Charlotte; and Lady Arabella would not marry Sir Edward. Her desire was twofold. She wished to remain friends, if possible, with all parties. She wished to marry Lord Swainton herself, to enjoy all the advantages of his improved fortunes and splendid estates, and yet she adhered with tenacity to her favourite project of a marriage between Sir Edward Clapperton and Lady Charlotte Dowling. She resolved, of course, that the latter project must, if necessary, be sacrificed to the former; but, in the first instance, she was determined to try *both*.

The Miss Clappertons were embarrassed what to do respecting Lady Muchberry. They had found her polite, attentive, and useful. But then the Swaintons would be often there, and to encounter them would be most painful,—indeed intolerable. They still clung to the hope that Sir Edward might fall in love with Lady Charlotte Dowling; but this he could not do unless he saw her, and they could scarcely hope she would visit them often without an exchange of visits, either at her house, or at Lady Muchberry's. Their brother's opi-

nion of Lady Charlotte they had not yet obtained. He always avoided the question of marriage, and appeared anxious to postpone all ideas of settling down in life, till he had seen much more of it.

Charlotte and Sophia consulted Mrs. Catherwood as to the conduct they should pursue with regard to Lady Muchberry and Lady Charlotte. She advised them to let the former know that they declined meeting the Swaintons, and to invite the latter as frequently as possible to see them. Mrs. Catherwood was a sincere admirer of Lady Charlotte, and saw no reason for changing her opinion, that she was in all respects most admirably suited to Sir Edward. This line of conduct they pursued, and hoped that their brother would before leaving Bath become enamoured of their favourite. But Sir Edward apprized them of his intended absence for a few days to attend to his parliamentary duties, as well as to arrange some matters connected with his succession to Mr. Maplestone's property, and to give directions for the preparation of Clapham Hall for their reception. "I have expected Colonel Dawson the last few days," said Sir Edward, "or I should have been in town before now; but I can wait no longer than to-morrow."

The same evening Colonel Dawson arrived, but it was only to stay a few hours. He had obtained a cadetship for his son, and wished to return to town the next day with Lucy. This plan suited Sir Edward, and as he travelled post he offered seats in his carriage to the colonel and his daughter. Lucy had spent most happy days in Milsom Street. There she had met Macfarlane, and he had fallen in love with her; there she had received her father's ratification of her choice; there she had been gay and joyous; and she left it with deep regret. True, the last week of her residing with the Clappertons had been less bright and happy than those which had preceded it; but she had found in Maria a delightful companion and a sweet friend. Colonel Dawson heard with delight that his daughter felt no longer any inconvenience from her chest, and expressed in glowing terms his gratitude to Sir Edward and to the Miss Clappertons.

Sir Edward's journey to London was enlivened by the conversation of Colonel Dawson. The colonel was attached to old Whig principles, and his model of a public man, was Earl Grey.

"We must have an aristocracy," said Colonel Dawson; "but it should be one where talent,

virtue, and a love of liberty exist in its chiefs or leaders. England cannot be governed militarily. The people are essentially free, and will not be drilled into thinking as the Duke thinks, simply because he is a great warrior. The Duke and Sir Robert are always too late. They do not take the lead. Public opinion goes first, and then they follow. They lost all their previous character for ability, by their conduct with reference to the Emancipation Bill. They vowed it would be unconstitutional to propose it, and yet they violated the constitution. If they remain in office they will act in the same manner with respect to reform. The Duke has declared that the present constitution of the House of Commons is the best one which can possibly be imagined; and yet in less than twelve months, if he remains in office, he will be compelled to propose its amendment. Neither himself nor Sir Robert have the wisdom or the tact to propose great boons before they are demanded. They are therefore, when granted, after violent struggles on the part of the people to obtain them, comparatively valueless. The race of the Tories is approaching its termination. They have been in office too long. Thousands of abuses need reform — and they will not apply the pruning-knife. Obsti-

nacy on their part will lead to increased resolution on that of the people. The moderate Tories of to-day will become Whigs ere long, and all ultra Tories will be left in a most deplorable minority."

Sir Edward was of the same opinion. He said he had been much staggered by the arguments of a friend of his, Mr. Morehouse, and by the facts and statements of Mr. John Hill. He thought he perceived with them, that the country was hastening on to a crisis: bread was dear, labour was ill paid, the farmers and manufacturers alike complained, and Ireland was far from being pacified by the one measure of conciliation which had passed. He feared that if the present system of government was continued much longer, there might be revolution: unless indeed an attempt should be made to return to the still more violent policy and government of such men as the former Lord Castlereagh. He had seen and heard so much at the Carlton, of violent politics, fierce threats, and determined menaces against all Whig or Reform proposals, that he felt satisfied no concessions would be made by the aristocracy until they should be wrung from them; and then they might be more than ought to be made. In fact, Sir Edward had become very much indeed of

Colonel Dawson's mode of thinking, and the startling statements he had heard at the Carlton had by no means tended to confirm him in his Toryism.

"But I thought you were the *Tory* candidate at Warnstable," said Colonel Dawson.

"I was the poor man's candidate, colonel," replied Sir Edward.

"In that case you were not the *Tory* candidate," said the colonel.

Sir Edward was silent. Soon after they reached London; Lucy and her father proceeding to Clapham, and Sir Edward alighting this time at Long's. There we shall leave him till we resume the thread of the narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

Here let those reign whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white,
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth,
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.

DR. JOHNSON.

My business in this state
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o'errun the stew.

SHAKSPEARE.

"You must meet Mr. Morehouse, indeed you must, colonel," said Sir Edward Clapperton, at the end of a long speech on the part of Colonel Marchton at the Carlton against reform, reformers, and all attempts to change the then existing state of representation in England.

"Oh, I have no objection to meet Mr. Morehouse or any one else," replied the colonel; "but I am as firm as a rock. My opinions are truisms, and I cannot change them. Some

men's sentiments are the result of prejudice, others of education, and others are as changeable as our horrible climate; but my sentiments are my convictions, the result of reading, reflection, observation, experience; and I cannot alter them.

"Will you allow me, colonel, to offer you a 'city dinner?' said Sir Edward,—a dinner at Kaye's at the Albion, — nothing better can be given in the metropolis than a snug dinner at Kaye's. I should enjoy above all things to hear you and Mr. Morehouse converse together. I will also invite Mr. John Hill, and Kaye's quartett dinner parties are princely.

"With all my heart," replied the colonel. "I have dined at Kaye's more than once; and his wines are the best *tavern* wines I ever tasted."

Sir Edward wrote a note to Mr. Morehouse, and another to Mr. Hill. The day and hour were agreed on; and Sir Edward called at the Albion and left to Mr. Kaye all the *dinatory* arrangements.

"I have some hock from Prince Metternich's estates," said Mr. Kaye, "and a moselle that will delight you."

"The best, of the best of everything," replied Sir Edward; and when such an order is given

to Kaye, his dinners are decidedly superior to even those of the Rocher de Cancale, at Paris.

Two days afterwards the party assembled. It was Wednesday. The House of Commons rose at five, and at half-past six Sir Edward, Colonel Marchton, Mr. Morehouse, and Mr. John Hill met in a snug but elegant sitting-room adjoining the *salle-à-manger* selected for the "feast of turtle, and the flow of wine."

As it would be wholly impossible, though aided by the eloquence of Ude, the knowledge of Dr. Kitchener, and the science of Dr. Henderson, to do justice to the wines or viands of the Albion, it is only necessary to record the fact, that all were unanimous in declaring that, taken as a whole, it was the most matchless performance they had ever witnessed. "I say this advisedly," observed the colonel, "as poor Canning always said when he wished to make a distinct and strong impression on the mind of the House: 'I say this advisedly.' Talking of Canning, I shall never forget his emotion and anxiety when he brought out Lord Morpeth. The young nobleman came forward for the first time to support the Catholic claims. Morpeth kept his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and Canning his eyes fixed on him. Morpeth appeared to have learnt his speech by heart. He stumbled

once — Canning changed colour — but as his young friend rapidly recovered himself, so the features of Canning were lighted up with joy. When Morpeth resumed his seat, Canning went up to him, and taking hold of him with both his hands, said, "You have done nobly, Morpeth." That was a proud moment for the young man, and all felt it to be so; though Canning was a low Whig in grain, and perhaps a radical reformer in heart.

"An odd sort of reformer was George Canning," said Mr. Morehouse; "he who wrote the 'Knife Grinder,' and ridiculed the sufferers from the massacre at Manchester, lampooning the 'ruptured' creature who had demanded indemnity for his wounds and injuries! Neither Canning, nor his school, were reformers; they belonged to the 'talented' school,—all things to all men,— and always a joke and a sneer for everything. Canning believed in nothing, and certainly not in himself. He was the counsel who pleaded, not the orator who was convinced. The aristocracy despised him for his origin and his poverty. The democracy rejected him, because he did not understand or feel their cause. His corn law ascending and descending scale was the emblem of his mind. He could not exclude foreign corn, for that was

opposed to his principles of trade; and he would not admit it at a small fixed duty, for fear of rendering yet more violent the landowners of the country against him. I shall never forget how Sir Edward Kentish scowled, when Canning advocated the new system of a rising and descending duty. It was a new idea to the baronet, and he was wholly unprepared for it. Sir Edward Kentish spoke scornfully of the measure, and looked more so at Canning. But Canning's turn came next, and poor Sir Edward could not have slept afterwards for a week. We are arriving at a period in public affairs now, when the people will be tricked no longer, either by the late Canning or the present Kentish schools; and when one long, loud, and commanding cry will be heard for 'cheap bread, and cheap taxes.'"

"They may cry till their lungs break,—till their hearts burst,—till they die in despair, and grind their teeth in the dust," said Colonel Marchton. "It is all very well, Mr. Morehouse, for men like *ourselves* to talk over these matters, and see what is best to be done; but the moment the word '*people*' reaches my ears, I feel with Lord Grey, who said so strongly and so nobly, 'I will stick by my order!' What can the greasy-capped creatures, whom you call

the 'people,' know of the corn laws? It is a vast question; one that has divided statesmen who have agreed on all other subjects; it involves in it the principles of political economy in the widest and most important acceptation of that science; it is connected with all our home, foreign, colonial, manufacturing, and shipping interests; and what should the 'people' know about these things?"

"They are men of practice," said Mr. Hill. "When they ask for 'cheap bread,' they mean that the quartern loaf should not be so dear; they know by experience that when wheat is at 60*s.* per quarter, their bread is dear. When they cry for 'cheap taxes,' they speak practically. The tradesman knows how much he has to pay for king's taxes, for poor's rates, for highways, and for church rates, every year. The labourer knows that he can get meat but twice or even once a week, because butcher's meat is dear; and that his wages will not allow him to pay his rent, his baker, and his butcher. The tradesman, when he asks for a 'cheap government,' knows perfectly well what he means also. He means that his rent is too high, because his landlord is so taxed that he cannot afford to make a diminution; he means that his business is falling off, because the mid-

dling classes are so ground down by local and general taxation, and by the dearness of all the necessaries of life, that they cannot afford to purchase any of its luxuries; and wear coats, gowns, frocks, hats, and so forth, of an inferior quality, and for twice the length of time they formerly did. The manufacturer, when he asks for an alteration in the corn laws, and, above all, for the free importation of corn, means that his manufactured goods at present increase in his warehouses, that foreign markets will not give money in exchange for British wares, that the foreigner offers his corn for British muslins, cotton goods, knives, and pottery ware; and therefore, as a practical man, the manufacturer asks for free trade. It is no answer to all these demands, to tell them that their caps are greasy, or that their shoes are rough,—any more than it would be a reply to your opinions, to say that your hat is of the best beaver, and that your boots were made at Paris. Is a *dear* loaf a better loaf than a *cheap* one?"

"Yes, it is," replied the colonel; "for when the loaf is dear, wages are high; because, as the landlord gets a good rent for his land, and the farmer a remunerative price for his corn, they can both afford to give high wages; and

the difference between high and low wages is much more important to the poor man, than the relative price of a cheap and dear loaf can be to him. I have often been exceedingly angry when, on attending a corn law meeting, my ears have been assailed by the twaddle put into the mouth of some mechanic, who has been paid by the manufacturers to attend and cry 'We want a cheap loaf!' I have said to these ignorant ruffians, in reply to their wretched demand, 'Will you eat more bread and less beef when you have a cheap loaf? Will you drink less beer when you have a cheap loaf? Is not your baker's bill always the least of all the bills at the end of the week? Why do you not cry for cheap boots, cheap shoes, cheap hats, cheap clothes, cheap beef, mutton, and pork? Do not your children and your wives require clothing? To be sure they do: and yet you never demand anything to be 'cheap,' but corn. The reason for this is plain. The manufacturing interests are selfish, cunning, and desperate. The increase of manufactured goods, by the introduction of ruinous machinery, which has thrown manual labour out of employment, is now so great, that the manufacturers must either diminish their manufactures, their lordly expenditure, and their princely

establishments, or they must find new vents for their goods and merchandise. Too fond of luxury and of pleasure, of magnificence and of pomp, to be contented with moderate profits, and a smaller business, the manufacturers seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the landed proprietors and farmers. They wish to get rid of their goods abroad. 'Be it so,' say we. 'Go abroad — sell your goods as well as you can — make as much money as possible — and God give you abundant success.' But this is not enough for them. 'We are very much obliged to you for your good wishes,' say the manufacturers: 'but we want something more from you than this. We must have the duty taken off foreign corn, in order to enable us to sell our goods abroad. Foreigners will pay us in *corn*, but not in money. If we can bring back corn in exchange for our goods, we may sell as much as we can manufacture; but as the present corn laws prevent us from doing so, it cannot be surprising to you that we should be dissatisfied.'"

"But what is the answer of the landowner to this demand? 'Gently, gently,' he says: 'was Great Britain first an *agricultural*, or a *manufacturing* state?' The manufacturers themselves are compelled to admit that she was first *agri-*

cultural. 'Then why are the agricultural interests of the country to be made subservient to the manufacturing? Suppose the agriculturists were to say, 'We want good silk gowns for our wives and daughters, with pretty colours, such as are manufactured in Lyons; and we want this, because our Spitalfields silks are dearer than the French, and not near so good or so striking;' what would our Spitalfields weavers say? They would say, 'First of all protect your own weavers, encourage them, endeavour to introduce improvements at home, before you seek to ruin them by allowing foreign manufactured silks to compete with them on equal terms.' And they would reply rightly when they said this; and I would be the first to support them in their demand. It is very easy to say that Providence has provided enough and to spare for all his creatures; but this is only true to a certain extent. Providence has prepared enough, provided we are frugal, industrious, and prudent, but not otherwise. If foreign corn shall be allowed to enter without duty, or with only a small duty into this country, it would soon be seen that Providence had not protected the landlords against ruin. The landlords would not be able to pay the taxes. The farmers would throw up their farms. The poor

man would have six shillings per week for his labour. Bread *might* be a little cheaper, but not six and seven shillings per week, which would be the difference in his wages. What would ensue? The poor would revolt;—and they would be justified in so doing. They would no longer cry for 'a cheap loaf,' but for 'high wages.' The working agricultural population would strike. And what then? Disorder and anarchy would prevail. But would the manufacturers suffer? Not at the first. Whilst the conflict would be going on, the manufacturers would sell millions upon millions worth of goods, and cram the bonding warehouses with foreign corn. The corn would sell; and for awhile the manufacturers would fancy they were getting rich. But at length the smash would come. The country shopkeepers would find the labouring poor no longer demanding their stuffs, their cotton goods, their stockings, their hosiery; and when the commercial travellers returned as usual, at the end of six months, to receive orders, the shopkeepers would reply, 'We have none to give you. There is no demand for anything. The labourer can only earn wages enough now to buy cheap bread; but meat, beer, clothing, all maintain their prices; and the consumers in all

the agricultural districts are now no longer able to purchase your manufactures. If things go on at this rate we must shut up shop, and you manufacturers must rely on your foreign trade. Then the manufacturer would learn from his own sad experience, that a cheap loaf was not so good even for him as a moderately dear one."

"The old story over again," replied Mr. Hill, "that high prices are conducive to the happiness of the mass. I thought that this absurdity had been too often refuted to require another refutation. However, as this is not the case, I must now claim a few moments' attention. It is *not* true then, as a matter of fact and practice, that wages decline in the same proportion as bread becomes cheaper. When bread has been cheapest, wages have kept up. I know that in some counties the most ungodly combinations have been entered into by over-rich landowners and overgrown farmers, to keep down the price of labour when corn has fallen; but such attempts have never lasted long, and have universally failed. The farmer has soon found out that if he will not give sufficient wages to his labourers to enable them to maintain their families, he will have to pay double, treble, or quadruple the poor's rates, and that what he may save one way, he will lose the other. There

is also only a certain amount of deprivation and misery that people will submit to; beyond that they will not be silent. The farmers, who live amongst their own labourers, know very well that ricks will be burned, cattle will be destroyed, sheep will be stolen, crops will be fired, and even whole farms swept away, if wages be not in proportion to rents, taxes, and prices. It is a fact, then, that when the agricultural poor get cheap flour, or cheap bread, they are great positive gainers, and are very little losers, if any, by wages. But then look at all the other poor labourers and mechanics throughout the country who are not dependent on the soil for support — what do not they gain by a cheap loaf? Theirs is unmitigated gain, unalloyed advantage. Their one pound per week wages are equal, with a cheap loaf, to one pound three shillings; and the extra three shillings supply shoes, hats, bonnets, stockings, all laid out at the shop, and all benefiting the wholesale dealer, the retail dealer, the commission agent, the broker, the commercial traveller, and the manufacturer. Cheap corn also means cheap barley, and, therefore, cheap malt, — and therefore cheap beer, — cheap, home-brewed beer, the best of all; — and even cheap brewers' beer, too; — for

combinations of even great brewers to keep up the prices of porter and ale, in the face of cheap malt, would not succeed. Besides which, the lower the price of an article of necessity, the greater will be its consumption. A loaf at fivepence, would be looked on with a very different eye to a loaf at ninepence. Instead of helping, as in the latter case, each of her children to a small slice, or perchance making potatoes a substitute for bread, the mother of a large family would take in three loaves instead of two, if bread were at the former price; and the British corn-grower would find a good market for his wheat, not at an enormously remunerative but at a fair and just price."

"That is just your error, Mr. Hill, and the whole of the school to which you belong," said Colonel Marchton. "You begin at the wrong end. Instead of calculating what incomes are essential to the aristocracy of the country, in order to enable them to keep up their present establishments, employ the present number of hands, and secure to the mass of the people the occupation and the wages they require; and then instead of calculating that these incomes must arise from their landed estates, and that these incomes

are the rents of the farms; and that these rents must be paid by the farmers; and that farmers cannot pay these rents unless the produce of their farms shall be sufficient to enable them to do so; and that this cannot be the case, unless corn shall be at a certain fixed and remunerative price per quarter: you begin on the contrary, by fixing a standard of wages which, you say, must be paid in all cases, whatever the price of corn and other agricultural produce may be; and then, in order to secure this standard price of wages, you set about not helping the farmer to pay them; — oh, no! what care you about that? — but seeking to prevent him doing so by introducing foreign corn, and reducing the price of home productions. We did very well during the war. Prices were high. Land was well cultivated. We wanted no foreign corn then. Merchants, manufacturers, farmers, and gentry, all got on most prosperously; and no complaints were to be heard in our streets."

"But the nation incurred a debt of eight hundred millions of pounds sterling," replied Mr. Morehouse. "Both you, colonel, and my friend Mr. Hill, look at this question parliamentarily. You have a certain fixed notion that this, and all other great questions, will be for

ever left to the Houses of Commons and Lords to decide. This will not be the case. They have been left so too long. The aristocracy have made the laws; the democracy have obeyed them. This was formerly the case in France and in America. But it is so no longer; and it will not be many years longer so in this country. You reason as an aristocrat. You forget or deny, that the base of the superstructure of society in this country, and indeed in all countries, is the people. In countries where the people are ignorant, priest-ridden, or hereditary bondsmen, they submit to their taskmasters without complaint, and to their privations and slavery without much sorrow. But, when you educate a people, christianise a people, give a cheap press to the people, and put newspapers and magazines, tracts and pamphlets, within the reach of the millions, you must not expect that they will consent to make the starting-point in political and social calculations, the one you suggest. No; they will say, 'Let us see how much is necessary to keep a man, his wife, and, on an average, four children; let us then take care that these wages be assured to each father of a family; let us require that his wages shall enable him to pay a moderate rent, and his baker, butcher, grocer, tailor, and linen-

draper, and put a little by in the savings-banks against disease, old age, and death. Let the farmer make as much by his corn and other produce as will enable him to pay a reasonable rent for his land, and live, not in luxury, but in comfort; not giving extravagant educations to his daughters, nor sending his sons to college.' And then, finally, they will say, 'The landlords must be contented with smaller but more secure incomes; they must be in future nothing more than landlords. We want no protection; we want bread, wages, and justice. We don't ask for any favour or for any patronage. We gain nothing by castles frowning down upon us, or by their barons and dukes smiling condescension as they pass us on the road. All those times are passed away, when in this country the feudal lords could call on their tenantry and serfs, to follow them to battle. A new age has arrived. It is no longer of any importance to the population of this country whether the aristocracy live in splendour or only possess competency. The people are aware of their own strength. They know that they could exist tomorrow as well without as with the aristocracy, whereas the aristocracy could not exist without them. What is important to the people is, to have cheap bread, cheap taxes, and a cheap go-

vernment. You, Colonel Marchton, maintain, that the first point is, to secure, intact, the present fortunes and incomes of the aristocracy. For this purpose, you would exclude foreign corn, keep up the price of bread, and of all other necessaries of life, maintain high rents, grind the poor, and pamper the wealthy. My system is precisely the reverse. I begin with the poor, or rather, with the mass of the people. All prices, I maintain, should harmonise with their means, their poverty, their wants. If the poor man cannot have a cheap loaf, cheap beer, cheap beef, a cheap house, and an abundance of the necessaries of life, then foreign corn must be wanted, farmers must diminish their personal wants and expenditure, landlords must reduce the rents of their lands, the profusion of the rich must be less profuse, and the distribution, if not of property, at least of income, must be more equal."

"This is the agrarian law," exclaimed Colonel Marchton, "but without its candour. I would rather know what I had to trust to at once, than remain in a state of uncertainty. Burn down our castles, then, destroy our parks, roast our sheep and our deer, our oxen and our fatlings, with bonfires made out of our own park-fences, break open our cellars, destroy our

title-deeds, proscribe us by club-law, and make it a hangable offence to be a gentleman. Then we might have some chance. *Our* turn *might* come again. The chances of war *might* ultimately be in our favour. We *might*, perhaps, one day be masters again. It was so in France, to a certain extent; and it *might* be so in England. But to leave us the title of masters, with the dependence of slaves; to leave us our estates with ruin ever impending over us; to mock us with the name of lords and proprietors, and yet to reduce our incomes by diminishing our rents, so as to render us bankrupts in our own manors, and insolvent in our own baronies — this would be a refinement of barbarity reserved for the levellers of the nineteenth century. No, Mr. Morehouse, we shall never agree now. The aristocracy are far more essential to the democracy of a country than are the democracy to the aristocracy."

"You must be joking," said Mr. Morehouse. "You are not serious."

"Upon my soul I am!" exclaimed the colonel; "if it was the last word I had to speak I should declare, that the aristocracy are more essential to the people than are the people to the aristocracy."

"Then the fish are more essential to the sea,

than the sea to the fish; then sheep are more essential to grass, than the grass is to sheep; then the consumption of the produce of the landlord's estates by the people, is not necessary to the landlord's subsistence; then the multitude is made for the units, and people are made for kings," said Mr. Hill in his dry, cool, mathematical manner, at once striking and odd.

"Oh! just as you will," replied Colonel Marchton with vivacity; "I have no objection to the *argumentum ad absurdum* at all. But to what does your hypothesis conduct? Let us see. That ignorance is superior to knowledge, and brute force to moral power. That numbers are to be regarded as the test of everything, and that mind is to submit to matter. The educated classes, because *physically* inferior, are to be kept down by the uneducated and the clods of existence. Who can assent to this? No, Mr. Hill, until society shall be remodelled, — until the tail shall become the head, and the head the tail, — until the aristocracy shall be destroyed by a fierce and cruel democracy, — and until the plough shall pass through our drawing-rooms, and over our grave-stones, the aristocracy of this country must and will be more important to the democracy, than the democracy can be to *them*."

"Then the plough WILL pass through your drawing-rooms," said Mr. Morehouse, "and more than this: such a new order of things will take place in this country within twenty years, as shall not leave one stone upon another of your existing institutions."

"No, no," interrupted Mr. Hill; "our parliamentary system contains within it seeds of self-regeneration. We shall soon have a reform of Parliament. A reformed Parliament will introduce to us new ideas, new men, and new systems. These will be discussed, rejected, discussed again, amended, adopted, and will lead to new changes of an organic nature. All this will be gradual. It will take much time. Ministries will be overthrown; — combinations will prove abortive; —struggles long and severe will take place; — but truth will triumph in the end. You may be sure of that. By degrees the aristocracy will be taught to rely on the middling classes, and the middling classes will join with and protect the poor. Toryism will disappear,—high-churchism will vanish,—philosophy will triumph, — and man will become happy."

"I detest your parliamentary system," said Mr. Morehouse.

"And I loathe it most heartily!" exclaimed Colonel Marchton.

"That was always the case with truth," replied Mr. Hill. "Truth was always a sober, and not a drunken lady. She always loved peace better than party, and order better than confusion. She never belonged to extremes. You, Colonel Marchton, are what I term an Ultra-Tory; and you, my friend Morehouse, are a Radical. I am a Whig. I believe in the doctrines of human progress and social perfectibility; but all by degrees, — all slow and sure. Toryism would conduct us back to priestcraft, and radicalism to infidelity."

"And Whiggism to the devil," interrupted Colonel Marchton; at which they all laughed heartily, and the conversation closed.

This dinner and conversation produced a powerful effect on the mind of Sir Edward Clapperton.

"I cannot be a Tory," thought Sir Edward, on his return to Long's hotel at a rather late hour. "Mr. Hill is right. We cannot b stationary. It is impossible. Toryism, as I now see it at the Carlton, is a very different thing to what I thought it was. Morehouse has the most interesting and captivating way of putting the question; but I cannot go quite so far as he does, yet. We must have reform. I see we must; but I

hope that timely reform may be the means of preventing anarchy."

The next morning, whilst Sir Edward Clapperton was breakfasting, a card was sent in by Dempster; it was that of the "Honourable Felix Montague."

"Ask Sir Felix to walk up stairs," said Sir Edward, who at first felt monstrously annoyed by the visit.

"Ah, my dear Sir Edward!" exclaimed Montague as he entered the room, "how glad I am to see you! I am afraid I disturb you at this early hour."

"Not at all, Montague, I assure you," replied Sir Edward; "pray be seated."

"I have called to remind you of a promise, Sir Edward," said Montague, "and I need only do this to secure its fulfilment."

"I hope so," replied Sir Edward; "I never yet made a promise without at least intending to fulfil it. Pray what was it?"

"You may remember," said Montague, "that you once said if ever you could render me any service, in return for the *small* help I gave you at Warnstable, you would be happy to do so."

"Not *small* help, Montague," replied Sir Edward, "but very important and valuable assistance."

"Well, be that as it may," said Montague; "you are always sure to say the kindest and most flattering things of every one. I now ask you to become my friend with Sophia, to plead my cause, to exercise the vast influence you possess over her, and to induce her to reconsider her decision. That I had no intention of deceiving her, was evident from my having communicated to her myself the fact of my being a widower."

"I do not accuse you of intentional concealment, Montague," replied Sir Edward, "nor, I believe, does Sophia; but what she feels is this, that as she made a promise to you in ignorance of the fact, she has the right now to reconsider, whether she would be as happy with you for her husband as she expected to be. I can speak of my own knowledge when I say that from a child she has had an almost constitutional aversion to widowers and second marriages; and it may perhaps be attributed partially to the example she witnessed of a most unhappy second marriage of her aunt. Her favourite aunt was a second wife, and she always cautioned her against following her steps. They led a miserable life, and finished by a separation."

"That was unfortunate indeed," said Mon-

tague; "but I ought not to suffer for the faults of Sophia's uncle."

"Oh, certainly not," replied Sir Edward; "but as you have done me the honour to call, will you allow me to mention a circumstance of great delicacy, but which may likewise have weighed with Sophia, and, I may say, with us all? Of what did your daughter die?"

"Of consumption."

"Brought on by what?"

"By a cold."

"We have been told differently," replied Sir Edward.

"Then what have you been told?"

"That consumption is in your family, and that your daughter was its *latest* victim."

"It is an utter and unfounded falsehood and calumny," said Montague with great warmth. "She was the *first* member of our family who ever died of consumption; and in her case it could be traced to the simplest and most positive causes. To set this matter at rest, here are the names of the medical men who attended my child at Scarborough. They are still living; write to them by this day's post. As to myself: who is your medical man? I will wait upon him when and where you please, with you or without you, now, or at

another time. This is a calumny intended to injure me; and, come what will, this must be cleared up."

"And so it shall, Montague," replied Sir Edward; "and if it turns out to be so, which after your declaration I have no right to doubt, I shall be most happy to fulfil my promise, and will converse very seriously with Sophia on my return in three or four days."

In fulfilment of his promise, Sir Edward wrote to the medical men at Scarborough, and received a reply confirming in every particular the whole of Montague's statement. When Sir Edward received these letters he invited him to breakfast; and, according to previous arrangement, Doctor Smithson was present to meet him. Doctor Smithson was not apprised by Sir Edward that there was any secret motive in inviting him to breakfast; but Montague, in the course of the morning, introduced the subject of hereditary disorders.

"They say I look consumptive," said Montague.

"Heaven forbid!" replied the doctor.

"I have a cough which teazes me sometimes, it is true; but I can run five hundred yards with any man breathing."

"You are just about as consumptive as West-

minster Abbey. I am consulting physician to the —— Life Insurance Company, and I will certificate you free from any complaint that should require an additional premium. Get all such nonsense out of your head, sir; you are as healthy a man as I have met with for many a long day. If we had only such patients as you, we might starve on leek porridge."

Sir Edward was more than satisfied; he was indignant at the calumnies which had been circulated respecting Montague. And yet, whatever might have been Lady Muchberry's motives, he could not suspect his friend Morehouse of anything underhanded or ungentlemanly. The next day he saw Mr. Morehouse, and requested him to re-examine the subject.

"If you recollect right," said Morehouse, "I directed my attention more to the question of whether Sir Felix Montague had been married before or not, and merely asked casually what was the cause of the death of his child. However, I will be most precise in my questions this evening, and will drop you a note."

Sir Edward begged Montague to dine with him at his hotel; and soon after dinner received from Morehouse the following communication:

"My dear Sir Edward,

"There must be some unfortunate mistake about this business of Montague and his daughter. She died of consumption brought on by a cold; but my friend never heard of Montague being delicate, or of any of his family being consumptive. Consumption is not hereditary. Heaven forbid it should be. Truth before all things.

"Ever yours,

"J. F. Morehouse."

"I will show you a note which will please you, but without the name," said Sir Edward; and Montague's eyes beamed with joy.

The next day Sir Edward, accompanied by Morehouse, returned to Bath to spend a few days; but what there transpired must be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

See how the world its veterans rewards !
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards :
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end ;
Young without lovers, old without a friend ;
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot ;
Alive, ridiculous ; and dead, forgot !

POPE.

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles ;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate ;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart ;
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

SHAKSPEARE.

LADY MUCHBERRY was most busily occupied during the week's absence of Sir Edward in London. She had "many irons in the fire;" but that which gave her the most trouble was her own proposed marriage with Lord Swainton. His lordship was not aware that his heart was at all warmed or softened by the increased attention and amiability of her ladyship, nor had she formed any different opinion of *his* character; but his improved fortunes, his new estates, his splendid equipage, and his

totally altered mode of life were quite irresistible; and if he had been as mad as a March hare, she would have felt no hesitation in marrying him. But how to bring this about, without compromising her character as a lady too deeply, was the real difficulty. She at length hit upon a plan which, in her opinion, was sure to succeed. Lord Clinemouth was an acquaintance, and a bit of a beau of hers. He was young, gay, quite a pleasure man, but had no objection to marry, provided by marriage he improved his fortunes. His father allowed him two thousand a-year to keep him quiet, and rather urged him to become a Benedict. Lord Clinemouth's family politics, however, were just the reverse of those *at that time* professed by Lord Swainton; and, in many cases, this would have been an insurmountable objection. But Lady Muchberry was well aware that Lord Swainton was far from being rigid either as to politics or religion, and that the only insurmountable objection to any man who should propose to his daughter, would be poverty. Lord Swainton had for some years drunk the bitter draught himself, and he knew how nauseous were the dregs. Now, as Lord Clinemouth was by no means poor, as his father was at once affluent and generous, and as the son had no objection

"to take to himself a wife," Lady Muchberry resolved on seeking to bring about a union which must operate to her own advantage.

"If *you* will not marry, Swainton," said her ladyship, "that is no reason why Arabella should not. I have a most admirable husband for her. He is young, good-looking, remarkably gay, has 2000*l.* a-year as a bachelor, and will have 1000*l.* at least more allowed him if he marries well. He is enamoured of your daughter, and who is not that knows her ——?"

"Except young Clapperton," interrupted his lordship, in a tone of marked chagrin and disappointment.

"Oh! never mind *him*," said Lady Muchberry. "I have a far more eligible proposal for Arabella than that of any city baronet, were he ten times as rich as Sir Edward."

"I guess who it is," replied Lord Swainton, "Lord Clinemouth. Well! if you can bring that about, my lady, I shall be delighted. I shall settle 10,000*l.* on Arabella."

"That is not enough," replied Lady Muchberry. "With a fortune of 40,000*l.* per annum your lordship cannot settle less than 20,000*l.* on Arabella, either in lands, or 1000*l.* per annum as an annuity."

"I will do so," said his lordship; "but no long courtships. A marriage proposed, arranged, and carried into effect at once. What will Lord Clinemouth's father, however, say to a marriage into *my* family? *He* only knows me as a Tory, whilst he is a Whig."

"Leave all that to me," replied her ladyship; "I will remove every obstacle, and arrange everything, — subject to your approval."

Lady Muchberry received a *carte blanche* from his lordship, and she engaged in the negotiations with her best energies. She saw Lord Clinemouth. He thought Arabella "a very decent sort of girl," and promised to write to his father. "Twenty thousand pounds was no great fortune, but the interest at five per cent. would be a passable augmentation to his own income;" and as the tastes of Arabella precisely harmonized with his own, he anticipated much happiness from the proposed union. Lady Muchberry found Arabella all eyes and ears open, when she mentioned the subject. It was clear to her ladyship's mind that Lord Swainton had communicated what had transpired to his daughter; and she was prepared to give an affirmative reply, without either consideration or consultation. Lord Clinemouth's father was not over fond either of the Cramwell or Swainton

families, but he was aware that the existing lord was by no means a zealous Tory, and was quite as likely to turn Papist and Whig as to remain Tory and Protestant. The wondrous change in Lord Swainton's fortunes was known to every one, and a marriage with Lady Arabella was considered as rather a lucky affair for young Lord Clinemouth. Lady Muchberry perceiving with delight that her project was likely to succeed, now addressed herself boldly to Lady Arabella.

"One good turn deserves another, my dear beautiful child," said Lady Muchberry, addressing herself to Arabella; "it is not right that your father should live alone. I also find single life dull. So long as you were likely to remain at home, I never so much as thought of the matter; but now that he will soon be left to his own resources, I think ——"

"I think so too," interrupted Arabella; "my lady, you may rely on me. Your habits, tastes, old friendship for my father and all our family, all point you out as peculiarly desirable to ——"

"Then we understand each other," said Lady Muchberry.

"Perfectly so," replied Arabella, "and you may rely on my best aid and influence. I

should have deeply deplored to have seen my father united to one young enough to be his grandchild; but your age, experience, standing in society, and intimate acquaintance with my father's eccentricities ——"

"Point me out as his proper companion," again interrupted her ladyship.

"Precisely so," said Arabella; "and, I again repeat, no exertion shall be wanting on my part to give success to your views."

Lady Muchberry was enchanted. Lord Clinemouth made formal proposals of marriage to Arabella. Those proposals were referred to his lordship's father and to Lord Swainton. Rapid were the replies, and as satisfactory as they were quick; for by the time Sir Edward Clapperton returned to Bath, it was known in all the best-informed circles that Lord Clinemouth "was shortly expected to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Lady Arabella, daughter of Lord Swainton."

"Beggars description!" said his lordship, as he saw Sir Edward arrive in Milsom Street, with his friend Mr. Morehouse. "What a good-tempered fellow he is, not to fling fortune, sisters, parliament, the Carlton, all his friends, all his enemies, his Clapham Hall, and his cockney acquaintances, all out of window

for the sake of Arabella! He may be satisfied with the compliments of Macfarlane, and the civilities of the Catherwoods, and the gratitude of Colonel Dawson, and the humbug of Lady Muchberry, who, I still suspect, keeps up his acquaintance; but if he had not been a goose of a lad, he would not have let Arabella slip through his fingers. Lady Muchberry has managed this affair with Clinemouth most admirably. She is a very able woman. Arabella wishes me to marry her ladyship. I might do worse. She is still a handsome woman; knows the world well; contrives to keep in with all parties; has a very tolerable income of her own; and I verily believe is sincerely attached to me. I must think about this, and take some decisive step to-morrow."

Sir Edward introduced Mr. Morehouse to his sisters. They had heard a great deal of him from their brother, and were by no means unprepared either much to like, or very much to dislike him. Sophia had been more prejudiced against him than Charlotte; but when the former was shown, by Sir Edward, Morehouse's letter to him respecting Montague, she was suddenly enlightened as to his character, and pronounced him to be "noble, honourable, and just." All this he was. Morehouse, was a

very different man to either Lord Swainton, Montague, or Captain Macfarlane. Though he was a gentleman by birth, education, and habits, he had drank deeply at the fountain of radicalism and reform, and his mind was constantly occupied with national movements, national questions, and national discussions. Politics engrossed not only his time, but even his affections; and to him music, the fine arts, the theatre, and light literature, were, when compared with politics, indifferent. He had a prodigious aversion to anything like "blue-stocking" tastes or employments in women; and sought in vain (when he thought of the subject) for some quiet, unpretending, modest, simple-hearted girl, with a moderate fortune, good health, gaiety of disposition, and liveliness of manners, who would add a thousand or two a-year to his income, and yet rather diminish than increase his expenditure by her general and prudent *surveillance* of his respectable but modest establishment. Morehouse could scarcely be called an old bachelor, for he was only thirty-six when first introduced to the Miss Clappertons. He observed with pleasure that the Clappertons were not "blues;" that they embroidered, made purses, and were in all respects truly feminine in their occupa-

tions. He talked a great deal of chit-chat with Miss Charlotte, and was amused with her simplicity and *naïveté*. He was not long making up his mind that she was the sort of person he had hitherto sought in vain; and with that candour and friendship which formed two of the most striking traits in his character, be hinted, in confidence, his sentiments to Sir Edward. Sir Edward often thought that the position of an only brother to two unmarried sisters, was far from being agreeable; but then he was so good-tempered a man at heart, that he was comparatively indifferent to his own comforts and enjoyments, provided he could see those happy whom he loved, or in whom he confided.

The day after the return of Sir Edward to Milsom Street he made known to Charlotte and Sophia all that had passed between himself and Montague, and faithfully did he keep the promise he had made to the latter, to plead with Sophia in his behalf. "My dear Sophia, now we have got rid of the most serious and important objection to Montague, I must say I think him a very excellent fellow; and it does strike me that he acted in a straightforward manner in communicating to you himself the fact of his having been previously married. Now, in my opinion, if we thought Montague a gentleman——"

"Oh, the most finished gentleman I ever saw; and I shall always say so," interrupted Sophia.

"Well then, if Montague was in our opinion the most finished gentleman we ever saw, before we knew he was a widower, what has been changed in his character or conduct by our knowledge of that fact? He is not older or younger for that. The only thing it proves is, that you are not the first woman who has been in love with him; and that your opinion of him is just such an one as another formed before you. I am convinced that Montague is really attached to you. I am satisfied he has no absolute need of your fortune to enable him to live like a gentleman, though it might be a pleasant addition. He has been gay, but he has sown his wild oats, and I am quite convinced that when hereafter he shall become Lord Montague, and enter into possession of a large fortune, he will be just as fond of you, attentive to you, and anxious for your happiness, as he is at present. I can say no more. If I have your permission I will write to him and ask him to spend a few days with us here prior to our return to Clapham. He assures me he was not aware that insanity was in the family of Lord Swainton. He was thrown into Lord Swainton's

society when he was Colonel Cramwell, and he had never heard a word respecting his insanity. When I showed him the proofs I possess of the accuracy of the fact, he admitted that nothing would be more absurd or wicked than for Charlotte to marry him; and he expressed his unfeigned regret that Lord Swainton had not ever made any allusions to the subject. At the same time he spoke with much of gentlemanly feeling respecting his lordship, and is evidently a man of an honourable and gallant character."

"Do just as you like," said Sophia, with beating heart and burning blushes. "I suppose then he will come down directly."

Sophia had as deeply regretted the temporary breaking off of the intimacy between herself and Sir Felix, as Charlotte had rejoiced in the termination of that which subsisted between her and Lord Swainton. Mrs. Catherwood had presented to her mind in such frightful colours the evils which might result to her health, constitution, mind, and permanent happiness from the proposed marriage with his lordship, that Charlotte felt convinced that in breaking off the projected union she had escaped from many miseries. Not so Sophia. She loved Montague, and he loved her. The difference

between their ages, though considerable, was not appalling: and their minds, tastes, habits, and prejudices were most similar and gratifying. Lord Swainton had made proposals to Charlotte just as he would have got up a "picnic" party. It was an affair of holiday making with him, from the moment he knew that he was the heir-at-law of Lord Warminster. Before that event, it was a matter of business, of life and death to him. When his fortunes were not only not brilliant, but positively bad, a marriage with Miss Clapperton was the best possible mode of assuring to him competency and comfort; but when once his social position was altered, and he found himself the possessor of large estates, and of a splendid income, he regarded his marriage with Charlotte as a sort of continuation of the extraordinary jovialities and merriment of the previous two months, and would have danced into wedlock without considering the consequences to either party. Charlotte admired his lordship; looked on him as a most agreeable and amusing man; felt a sort of gratitude to him for his conduct towards Sir Edward; calculated the advantages of being the lady of a peer, and the mistress of vast establishments and a large income; and consented to marry him notwithstanding the great dispa-

rity of their ages, not because she loved him, but because she thought it was in all respects a desirable and fortunate offer. Since her acquaintance with his lordship had terminated, she had been informed that he amused himself by ridiculing her, and was inveterate against all but Sir Edward, in consequence of the strange and unlooked-for end of his intimacy with the Clapperton family.

Lady Muchberry pursued her plans with avidity. She was constantly with the Swaintons. "They tell me, my lord, that Mr. Morehouse, the member, has made an offer of marriage to that silly thing, Miss Clapperton, and that the nuptials are to be celebrated in about a month."

"And they tell me," said his lordship, "that your ladyship and myself are to be before them, and that the Morning Post will announce our marriage a week before theirs."

"Oh, my lord, how droll you are!" replied Lady Muchberry: "you are the oddest, most amusing, extraordinary man I ever met with in my life. It 's well the walls cannot hear you. What would every one say if it were known that you talk in this way? Do hold your tongue."

"I am serious," said his lordship. "I have

long known, admired, and loved you. Your talents, mind, and heart entitle you, my lady, to universal admiration. I should long before this have thrown myself at your feet, if my fortunes would have justified me in the proposal. They no longer offer any impediment; and I put my future happiness entirely in your power."

Lady Muchberry declared "that she was overwhelmed with surprise; and that his lordship was the last man she ever thought was attached to her: but that if he believed she could render him happy during the rest of his life, she felt no doubt that he would be to her a source of unbounded felicity."

In this sort of strain the conversation continued in Lady Muchberry's drawing-room, till the white silk curtain drapery of the windows seemed to blush at all the soft and warm, gentle and tender speeches which were uttered, till "the shades of evening" closed in upon these devoted lovers.

Her ladyship agreed with Lord Swainton that a *long* courtship in *their* case would be "monstrous,"—and that day three weeks was fixed on for their marriage.

Lord Clinemouth heard of this event with surprise. How often had Lady Muchberry laughed at, ridiculed, and blamed Lord Swain-

ton. She had lauded his daughter, it was true; but during months before ever she had spoken to him of Arabella, he had heard her quiz her father, and the Clappertons, most unmercifully. Lord Clinemouth was, however, as much in love as he ever could be with any one, with Lord Swainton's daughter. She was the style of woman he admired. "She looked *so* well in a ball-room; created such a sensation wherever she appeared; and was so decidedly handsome, that he wondered he had been lucky enough to secure such a prize." Lord Clinemouth sent a splendid miniature of Lady Arabella to his father; and he wrote back to his son, that Lord Swainton's daughter was "angelic."

The lawyers were soon busy. Lady Muchberry gave directions that her own fortune should be settled on herself, and then on his lordship, should he survive her. Lord Swainton directed that one of his largest estates should be settled on Lady Muchberry for life, with reversion to his children after her death; and he employed Lady Muchberry's solicitors. As to Lord Clinemouth, his father was so struck with the beauty, and afterwards on arriving at Bath, with the affability and mental attractions of his intended daughter-in-law, that

he directed a deed to be prepared, charging his estates with an annuity of 4000*l.* a-year in favour of his son during his life, and with 3000*l.* a-year to Arabella, should she survive her husband. Lord Swainton directed a settlement of 1000*l.* per annum to be made on Arabella; and all the other arrangements were on the same liberal and extensive scale. The lawyers got to work speedily to prepare the necessary documents.

The arrival of Montague at Bath was a source of unbounded joy to Sophia, but of annoyance and grief to Lord Swainton. What could it mean? When he first heard the fact, he would not believe it to be true; but the next day he received a letter from Montague, informing him in general terms of all that had transpired. Lord Swainton became furious. He wrote to Montague to say, that he was astonished that he could so degrade himself, after the *congé* he had received from the daughter of a London goldsmith; and that he had hoped no friend of his would have so condescended as to have sued for the hand of one who so little understood her position in society. At the same time the letter expressed his lordship's desire to continue the friendship which had long subsisted between them, and assured

him that he should rejoice to learn that the proposed marriage contributed to his happiness.

Lady Muchberry had carried the most important of her varied schemes into effect, by securing Lord Swainton for herself, and Lord Clinemouth for Arabella. But there was another favourite plan she had not lost sight of, which was the union of Sir Edward Clapperton with Lady Arabella Dowling. How was this to be brought about? Lord Swainton very naturally required that Lady Muchberry should give up the acquaintance of the Clappertons, and she could therefore no longer lavish her praises on her *protegée*, or excite in the breast of Sir Edward a passion for her fair friend. What then was to be done? She determined to confide to Lady Charlotte Dowling all her secrets,—to apprize her of all that was passing, and to urge on her the expediency of continuing the friendship of the Clappertons, and of thus seeing them and Sir Edward more frequently. But Lady Charlotte would not fall into her plans. Whilst she admitted that Sir Edward Clapperton was a most agreeable and gentlemanly person, and that should he evince an ardent attachment to her, it was by no means impossible, or even improbable, that she would

accept his offer, yet she respected too much her own dignity, and valued too highly her own character, to make any sacrifice of either. She had no wish from a feeling of prudishness to abandon the acquaintanceship of the Clappertons; but she was not prepared to play the coquette in order to ingratiate herself with a young and rich city baronet. "Sir Edward has seen me, my lady,—seen me several times,—has said very civil and very polite things, but that is all. I can make no advances. All must be made by him."

Lady Muchberry heard this and similar declarations with much regret. Her pride was wounded; for her predictions were likely to be defeated. She had spoken of the "match" to many of her acquaintances, and she could not bear the word "failure." She consoled herself, however, by the recollection that she had carried by far the most interesting and important points, and that the affair of Lady Charlotte and Sir Edward was quite of a secondary character.

Although, however, Lady Charlotte refused to resort to any means by which she should fall more frequently into the society of Sir Edward, she perceived with pleasure that the Miss Clappertons appeared increasingly at-

tached to her, and that they invited her to all their amusements, and to all their parties, whether small or large. Mr. Morehouse thought Lady Dowling "one of the most accomplished and stylish women he had seen a long time," and fully agreed with Mrs. Catherwood, who took a vast liking to the Radical M.P. from his candour and ability, that she would make a most admirable wife for Sir Edward; but Morehouse was not the sort of man to engage his mind, or occupy his time with these subjects of conversation or intrigue. He gave his opinion, because it was asked; and he gave a true opinion, because it was not in his nature to give a false one. He did not even speak to Sir Edward on the subject, and was so engrossed with the contest going on in France, and with the then approaching crisis in England, that he looked on all other matters as of a very secondary nature.

Montague was once more happy. Sophia was as devoted to him as before the fatal moment, when the word "widower" was pronounced. He was gay, witty, light-hearted, and the life of the cheerful circle at Milsom Street. Still that circle missed Lord Swainton; they missed his vivacity, his oddities, his eccentricities, his perpetual talk, and his inex-

haustible bouncing. But when it came to be known, through Lady Charlotte Dowling, that Lady Muchberry had won his heart, and that Lady Arabella had so very soon promised her hand to Lord Clinemouth, it was unanimously agreed that their names should be no more referred to, and that they should rest in that shade which would most charitably cover their multitudinous follies, and unforgivable inconsistencies. Even Montague confessed that Lord Swainton surprised him. No man had ever spoken of Lady Muchberry as *he* had done: "Busybody," "gamester," "the queen of fibbers," "not to be trusted in by man, woman, or child," — were some of the epithets and kind speeches he had often made use of when speaking of her ladyship; and now he was to be married to her! and that within eighteen days from the time the news reached Milsom Street.

Mr. Morehouse's society was soon much valued by the ladies. As he would not condescend either to tittle-tattle or idle gossip, they took an interest in his more profitable, though not less lively, conversation.

"I was a few weeks since at Paris," said Mr. Morehouse; "and it may not be uninteresting to you to be made acquainted with the

Duke of Orleans' family. I had the honour of visiting them at the Palais-royal, where they were residing for the winter. I was introduced by M. Lafitte, who I found was most intimate with that branch of the royal family of France. The Duke of Orleans is accused of aspiring to the crown, and is known to have signed and deposited a protest against the legitimacy of the Duke of Bordeaux. The Duke of Orleans has five sons and three daughters, and I never saw a handsomer family in my life. I know not what may be his secret intentions, plots, or views; but he is evidently one of the best of fathers, husbands, and masters. I have seldom seen—I may say never—such enthusiastic affection as his children and all who surround him exhibit towards him: he is quite their idol. I met at his palace the chiefs of the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies. They all appeared to say, "Thou shalt be king hereafter," and yet these were the French Whigs and Radicals. Some, indeed, with whom I conversed, shook their heads at the idea of any monarchy at all, should the present race of princes be again banished from France; and amongst these was Lafayette. He had a fixed and a firm persuasion that a republic would be the only cure for the evils of bad government. The Duke of

Orleans, it is said, conversed occasionally with M. Guizot, M. Casimir Perier, General Lamarque, and General Lafayette, on these subjects; and when conversing with Lafayette, always spoke of America with enthusiasm; but Lafitte was said to enjoy most of his confidence. The duke was known to have some apprehensions that he might be requested by the Government to leave France, or to travel abroad, if he showed much animosity to the present Polignac administration, and he was therefore more cautious in giving any opinion as to the state of public affairs than was generally the case with him. Ordinarily he talks a great deal, and is rather fond of political gossip and court news. He was accused by the priest party at the court of having got up the tumult in the Palais-royal on occasion of the recent visit of the King of Naples to that city. The Duchess of Orleans is not a Frenchwoman, except in appearance. She is a Neapolitan by birth, but an Englishwoman in her domestic tastes and social and matronly habits. Her eldest daughter is one of the most charming women I ever saw, and her daughter Marie has the most exquisite taste for sculpture and painting. She is a fine artist. The duke is said to be intriguing for the throne; and, being con-

vinced that a revolution is now inevitable, he is seeking to ingratiate himself with the revolutionary party. It is believed that he has secretly subscribed to the funds raised for establishing a republican journal called 'The National,' to be edited by some of the most able and zealous men of that party. If this could be proved against him, it might lead to serious debates in the House of Lords; but he is said to be too able to admit of the possibility of the supply of funds being traced to him. Lafitte is taking a very deep interest in the passing events, and this is the more surprising, as he is a rich banker.

"On ordinary occasions there are no men in whom I place so little confidence as bankers. They are sometimes selfish, sordid, hard-hearted, suspicious. It is said at Paris that Lafitte is an exception to this rule; and most likely this is because he is a republican."

The Miss Clappertons opened their eyes at such opinions as these; but they adhered to the advice of their brother, given at Clapham Hall when they first resolved to seek to gain admittance to the fashionable world, which was, never to ask questions, and to hear all, and say but little. Still Miss Charlotte could

not be wholly silent, and she therefore ventured to inquire,

"Are you a *republican* then, Mr. Morehouse?"

Mr. Morehouse evaded the question. He said there were but two forms of government he could understand, and all the rest were twaddle. The one form, was the government of the millions by the units, and the other was the government of the units by the millions. In plain terms, he could understand absolute monarchies and republics; but he could neither understand nor approve of parliamentary or mixed governments. "Just look," he said, "at the present state of affairs in this country. Here are the people united to demand a reform of parliament. They do so by their petitions, addresses, resolutions, meetings, and by their conversation, speeches, and writings. Yet reform is refused. The House of Commons is styled a chamber of representatives; but whom does it represent? Not the people: for nineteen-twentieths of the people—even of the male population of twenty-one years and upwards—have no right to vote for representatives. Yet this chamber of representatives, elected by a very small fraction of the country, undertakes

by only a small majority even of that very small fraction, to refuse to alter the system of representation, and to introduce wise, wholesome, and even gradual reforms. What is the cure for such a state of things as this? Revolution, and nothing less! My friend Mr. Hill dreams of a cure by a pressure from without; but there must be a vast deal of pressure, before the Whigs and Tories will give way. These are the two great factions in the state which are always playing either intentionally, or otherwise, into each other's hands. They will never seriously reform the representation of the country. Some people are silly enough to believe that the Whigs hate the Tories, and the Tories the Whigs. This is the great delusion which both parties have an interest in perpetuating. We, the Radicals, hate the Tories; and we, the Radicals, hate the Whigs: but as for Whigs and Tories, the only point in dispute between them is, as was the case with the two lawyers, not who should get the oyster-*shells*, but who should eat the oyster. When the Whigs are in office, they do as the Tories did before them; but the Tories cry 'Shame! shame!' not for what the Whigs do, but only that *they* do it. They are by no means dissatisfied with the measures of their adversaries, but only with

their own position. So when the Tories are in power, the real Whigs support them invariably against the Radicals, and back them in all opposition to reform. Look, for example, at the case of General Palmer, one of the members of this city. He has been cruelly treated, —most cruelly, with regard to the post-office affair, and his neglected interests. When the Whigs reigned, they neglected his father; when the Tories were in power, they neglected him. And if the Whigs should return to office once more, they will be just as deaf to his complaints as the Tories. They both vote against economy; both support large civil lists; both defend the agricultural, against the commercial and manufacturing interests; both abhor reform; both uphold the horrible pensions, as well civil as military, not granted for real services, but for treasons, or as rewards to mean and unprincipled courtiers and flatterers. There is nothing, then, to be hoped for from them. The people will soon find this out, and then rise like the lion from his lair!"

When Morehouse pronounced these denunciations and declamations Sir Edward was always silent. He felt that he could not reply to him; and yet he was but half converted. He was in heart, however, a Tory no longer.

Mr. Morehouse was now summoned unexpectedly to town to attend a parliamentary committee. He took a hasty leave. He had intended to say something amiable to Charlotte; but he had neither time nor courage. He wished to see more of her, and he urged the rapid arrival of the Clappertons in London.

"We hope soon to see you at the Hall," said Sir Edward; and Morehouse replied he should be delighted. So they parted.

CHAPTER IX.

Beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
SHAKSPEARE.

So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.
SHAKSPEARE.

Duncan is in his grave.
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.
SHAKSPEARE.

MARIA CATHERWOOD formed such a contrast by the sweetness of her disposition, the innocence of her character, the artlessness of her mind, and the delicacy and yet gaiety of her manners, to the Lady Muchberrys and Lady Arabellas, and the Dovelands, Weylands, Pallerstones, and even Lady Witchie of Bath, as well as to all those with whom the Clappertons had become acquainted, with all their noise, tumult, dash, falsehood, flattery, and ferment, that Charlotte and Sophia, as well as Sir Ed-

ward, secretly turned to her with increased pleasure and renewed confidence. There was so much of repose in her character; so much of intrinsic worth; and so much of the hidden sweetness and charms of woman in her nature and habits; the eye of the mind, and above all, that of the soul and the heart, turned to her for quiet happiness and calm delight, after all the glare, gilding, and glitter of the vain, selfish, and conceited, who had fatigued and nauseated the lookers-on. She partook, in this respect, of her mother's character. There was equanimity without monotony; repose and quiet without dulness; and placidity without *ennui*. No one could laugh more heartily than Maria; but then she was not always laughing. Her laugh did not resemble that hysterical noise which some mimic, and others affect. Hers was no forced laugh,—no exaggerated laugh,—a laugh intended to represent gaiety, but more truly resembling vacuity. No; when Maria laughed, it was because she was merry,—and she delighted to be so. She had charming notions about female character. She neither pretended to equality with men, nor desired it. She was satisfied to be a woman, with all her dependence and all her sorrows, but with all her high behests, and all her dignified

characteristics. She could never understand those of her sex who sighed to be men, or who longed to share with them the toils of business, the strife of the political arena, or the partisanship of religious feuds. She had no objection to be thought "the weaker vessel," and loved the idea of looking up to some one to protect, cheer, and cherish her. All her accomplishments were feminine, and were all graceful, beautiful, and delightful. She drew and painted charmingly; she loved the piano, and greatly excelled in private; but had no love of display, and much preferred a quiet morning with a friend of her own age, devoted to music, singing, and the pencil, to the noisy, clap-trap *soirées* of Lady Arabella. But then she never obtruded these opinions upon others. Whilst visiting the Clappertons, though she saw and heard much which was not in harmony with the character of her own sweet mind, yet she extracted honey from every flower, looked at the bright side of every one's disposition and conduct, and sought to learn some good or agreeable thing even from those whose tastes and habits were least like her own. In all this she was the reproduction of her benign and lovely mother. They neither desired to be rich, powerful, popular, nor the subjects of conversation or

admiration. They had a few dear ones, whom they loved truly; and those in their turn adored them. Lady Charlotte Dowling soon became one of their friends. As to Maria, Lady Charlotte regarded her as a sort of angelic spirit, and was never so happy as when she was hovering about her. Maria was scarcely less attached to her. They embroidered together, played together, sang together, read together, and talked together. The Miss Clappertons were, on the whole, nice, kind, good-hearted, excellent girls, and Maria was most sincerely attached to them; but without saying, and scarcely without thinking so, she sometimes felt that Lady Charlotte was greatly their superior.

Although Maria was not ignorant of the fact that her mamma wished to see Sir Edward unite his destinies to those of Lady Charlotte, she could not help thinking that she must sometimes have betrayed before her mother, in her moments of filial confidence and truthfulness, the fact that she was in heart attached to Edward Clapperton. She had never spoken of his declaration of love to her, except at the time to his sisters, and they had referred to it in their conversations with their father and mother. But some years had elapsed since these circumstances had transpired, and Mrs.

Catherwood, if ever she suspected that their attachment to each other was rather stronger than that of friends brought up together under similar circumstances would be, had long since ceased to think of the matter; and when young Price had proposed to her daughter, had never once said to herself, Maria has a prior attachment for Edward.

One morning, as Maria and Lady Charlotte Dowling were sitting in the drawing-room at Milsom Street, recreating themselves in each other's society, and passing the hours which glided too quickly by most delightfully, in music, reading, and conversation, Sir Edward made his appearance. It was somewhat sudden; and Lady Charlotte thought she perceived a blush of pleasure and satisfaction on the cheeks of Maria. He complimented her on her beautiful appearance, asked for a song of "former times," looked at her with evident delight, and, after remaining about half an hour, took his departure. Maria heaved a deep sigh as he left the room, and that sigh did not escape the notice of her fair and sweet companion. "Maria," said Lady Charlotte, "I will tell you a secret, on condition that you will tell me one too. I know you have one to tell me; for that sigh which has just escaped came from your

heart. Now, come,—trust me with your secret, and you shall know mine."

"I cannot make such a bargain as that, dearest Charlotte," said Maria. "My secret might give you pain, and yours might, perhaps, give me no pleasure. If your secret be a merry one, let us enjoy it together; but if it be a sad one, let me share it with you."

"You little selfish puss," cried Lady Charlotte; "so you would share with me my sorrows and my smiles, but you would not let me do the same with yours. I suppose you cannot trust me."

Poor Maria was touched with the tenderness of her friend, and yet could not bear the idea of Lady Charlotte imagining that she would not trust her. "I would trust you, my dear Lady Charlotte, with my heart's dearest secrets, if they would either please, benefit, or console you; but they would do neither. It may be that our secret is the same."

"I think it is," said Lady Charlotte; "and candour and openness of character are the traits I most love to see in those whom my heart cherishes."

There was a dead silence.

"You love Sir Edward Clapperton," said Lady Charlotte. "I know you do, Maria. And

more than that, he has told you that he loves you."

"He once loved me," replied Maria; "but that was many years ago! A whole century of things has passed since then. It seems an age since he asked me if I could love him. He was plain Edward Clapperton then,—not a baronet,—and not a Member of Parliament,—but the son of Mr. Clapperton, a respected and wealthy goldsmith."

"And what did you reply?" asked Lady Charlotte, with features which expressed all her emotion and interest.

"Oh, I told him to wait. I knew that my family was much less wealthy than his; that Mr. Clapperton and the daughters looked a great deal higher than we did; and that if he should persist in his declarations at that time, they would have led to a breaking up of the affection which had subsisted for so many years between our families. Since then we have thought no more of it; and now you, my dearest friend, have all his love."

"You are mistaken, my sweet Maria," replied Lady Charlotte. "Sir Edward is still your lover. No one has told me so; no one has hinted at it. In the course of all the conversations I have had respecting him with others,

or have heard others engage in without taking part myself, your name has never been mentioned; and yet you, I am sure of it, possess his heart."

"Now for your secret," said Maria, wishing to turn the conversation, and avoid giving her opinion on the last observation of her friend; "it is your turn to trust in me."

"I will do so," replied her ladyship. "I also love Sir Edward."

Maria's heart could no longer keep within its natural and accustomed boundaries; and large gushing tears soon betokened her emotion.

"Then, Edward loves you," said Maria, in a sort of half doubting, half certain, half inquiring, half hesitating manner."

"No, Maria! Sir Edward loves you; but I love Sir Edward. His manners, his good-heartedness, his liberality, his unaffectedness, his simplicity, his good sense, his agreeable person, his cheerfulness, his true politeness, his conduct towards his sisters, have all deeply interested me in his favour; and if Sir Edward had looked at me, and smiled at me, as he did at you just now, I should have been one of the happiest of beings in the world."

"And he will do so," said Maria, still unconvinced, notwithstanding all that Lady Charlotte

had said, that Sir Edward yet cherished any other sentiment for her than that of a brother for a beloved sister; "Sir Edward loves me as a sister, and nothing more. He has often said during my last illness, and since my stay here, that we are all sisters and brothers together, and nothing more."

"I know not what he may have *said*, Maria, but I know well what he *feels*. I am sure of it. I would stake my existence on the fact," replied Lady Charlotte. "I have now and then thought as much, but I have discarded the thought, for I felt pleasure in imagining that he might one day love me. I find I was mistaken; I am sure I was. You are the being to whom he is looking for future happiness; but your mamma is not aware of it. She has talked so much to me about him; praised his every quality, and even expressed her desire, strong and ardent too, that I might one day become his wife,—that I am sure she is ignorant of the fact. This is extraordinary, my dear Maria. Have you not confided to one you love so dearly, a secret like this?"

Maria wept. She felt that the secret of her life had been discovered, and that all the consequences of that discovery must fall upon herself.

"I wished to keep my own sorrow to my own heart," said Maria. "If Edward had shown to me renewed or increased attachment, I should have hastened to disclose the circumstances to one whom I love far better than life. But years have passed away since he first told me that he loved me; and I have since seen him retire from business, become a man of the world and of pleasure, occupy himself with politics and high society, much higher than any I aspire to; wholly independent of me, my views, my opinions, or my tastes. The liberty I gave him, he has used to its utmost limits; and some months since, when the eldest son of one of our first merchants made me an offer of marriage, Charlotte Clapperton informed me that her brother was surprised I had not accepted his suit. I do not say that Edward Clapperton is indifferent to me; I know he is not. If I were poor, he would enrich me; if I were ill, he would nurse me; if I were sorrowful, he would console me; but, I believe, if I were well married and happy, he would rejoice with me."

"You are mistaken, Maria; I know nothing of the facts you mention. I am wholly ignorant of even the name of the gentleman who sought your hand in marriage. No one has

ever breathed in my ear one syllable of your past or present history; and yet I am sure, as sure as that I exist, that Sir Edward would never have allowed your marriage with any one but himself; and that he confides wholly and entirely, but without saying so, except to himself, that you will never marry any one but him. I am so certain of this — that from this moment I renounce entirely all the hopes I had ever cherished of his affection for me — hopes which were of my own creation — and which by no one look or word has he even for one moment encouraged."

"I am afraid you will love me no longer," sobbed Maria; "and yet my heart tells me that I would not lose your love for —"

"Lose my love, Maria," replied Lady Charlotte; "for what? how? why? what can you mean? Lose my love, because you have slighted a love which I should have cherished, and too hastily renounced the hope of a marriage which I should have dwelt on with delight? No, my sweet friend, our mutual confidence should be the basis of renewed affection, renewed sympathy. If I had been Sir Edward, my choice would have been like his; and I am satisfied in my own mind that, like myself, he has never wavered. I loved you, dear Maria,

from the first hour I saw you; and my affection has gone on increasing with every fresh opportunity of becoming more acquainted with your heart and mind."

Maria was too overcome by the kind, warm, tender, and delicate expressions of her friend to make any reply. She planted kiss after kiss on the cheeks of Lady Charlotte, and felt that she loved her with all her heart.

"There is one step," said Lady Charlotte, "which you must take, Maria. You know what I mean. Your mamma must be made acquainted with your feelings. Shall I be the medium between you?"

"Oh no, dearest creature!" replied Maria; "I will avail myself of the first opportunity which shall present itself for unburthening my heart."

From that time forward Lady Charlotte Dowling went much less frequently to Milsom Street — prevailed on Mrs. Catherwood, Maria, and the Miss Clappertons oftener to visit *her* — and avoided, rather than sought, any further interviews with Sir Edward.

During one of the long walks on a fine morning from Milsom Street to the residence of Lady Charlotte, Mrs. Catherwood and Maria talked much of the sweetness, amiability, and talents of their beloved friend.

"How happy I should be," said Mrs. Catherwood, "if Sir Edward would but make her an offer, wouldn't you, Maria?"

"Not exactly so, dear mamma," replied Maria.

"Why, I thought you were exactly of my opinion, my dear Maria; have I not heard you say so?"

"I think not, mamma; I am in the habit, as you know, of saying what I think on almost all occasions; and never what I do not think."

"Oh, then you never said so, my dear," replied Mrs. Catherwood; "but what is your objection to Lady Charlotte?"

"None whatever — oh, none in the world; objection to Lady Charlotte, mamma! Why, next to you, I think her the most perfect creature in the world."

"Oh, then I suppose you are of opinion that Sir Edward is not good enough for her. Is that it?"

"Not exactly so, dearest one," said Maria; "for Edward is the best and kindest-hearted fellow I ever heard of."

"Come, then, you must tell me what is your reason, for you know I am a poor hand at guessing riddles; unless it be that you think they are not suited to each other. Is that your reason?"

"No, dearest one, you must guess again; for I think they are the most likely people possible to be happy together, if married."

"Well, then I have but one more guess to make, and I suppose you will scold me, Maria, for guessing that, which must be, that you would rather be Lady Clapperton yourself."

Maria blushed deeply in spite of her previous tone of pleasantry and *badinage*, and Mrs. Catherwood was in possession of the secret.

Mrs. Catherwood now understood some points in the history of her daughter's indispositions, and refusals of more than one eligible offer from young men of fortune and high respectability, which she had not previously fathomed; and the enigmas which once confounded her were all now explained. Maria made her acquainted, for the first time, with Sir Edward's first and boyish offer of his hand and heart, with her indefinite postponement of her reply, and with all the circumstances which had since transpired. Mrs. Catherwood felt delighted that so few days now remained prior to herself and her daughter leaving Bath, since she much doubted the accuracy of Lady Charlotte's opinion, and was quite unconvinced that Sir Edward had continued to feel the same sort of attachment to

Maria that she evidently did for him. Mrs. Catherwood entreated Maria to continue her past line of quiet, unostentatious friendship to Sir Edward, so that he might continue to feel, and to act with perfect unconstraint; and Maria fully concurred in all such counsels.

The day at length drew nigh when the Clappertons were to leave Bath for London. Sir Edward could not or would not remain longer away from his parliamentary duties; Mrs. Catherwood was most anxious to get back to the metropolis; and Charlotte and Sophia longed again to see their favourite and increasingly loved residence on Clapham Common. Two days prior to leaving Bath they resolved on making a long morning ramble. The weather was fine and inviting, but unseasonably warm. On returning to Milsom Street, they observed a crowd of persons round the residence of Lord Swainton. There was no loud talking; there were no cries or disturbances; but a very considerable number of people were conversing together with serious and disturbed countenances, and all in a low tone of voice.

"Dear Edward," said Charlotte, who was walking behind her brother with Maria, "what can be the matter? perhaps his lordship or Lady Arabella are ill. Is the knocker muffled?"

Sir Edward looked. The knocker was not muffled; but the door was only half-closed, and the inmates of the house were evidently much agitated, for persons were to be seen running about from room to room.

"I must leave you," said Sir Edward to Mrs. Catherwood, who had hold of his arm; "excuse me, — I fear something serious has occurred; and his lordship has shown me too much kindness during past days, to admit of my remaining indifferent in case I could be useful."

As Sir Edward proceeded to the crowd, and afterwards entered the residence of his lordship, Mrs. Catherwood exclaimed, "I never saw such a fellow in my life as Sir Edward; he has one of the finest hearts I ever heard of in the course of my experience."

Sir Edward ascertained from the assembled crowd that Lord Swainton had been observed by some persons residing in Milsom Street, as he was walking to his house, to stagger and then to fall. They had raised him up and carried him home; but according to some he was senseless, and the reports of others were, that he was dead. On entering the house all was in a state of unparalleled confusion. Some of the servants were carrying his lordship to

his bed-room. Lady Arabella was in strong hysterics. Lady Muchberry's solicitor was waiting in the dining-room, accompanied by his clerk, with the proposed marriage settlement of his lordship with Lady Muchberry, duly engrossed, that they might obtain his lordship's signature. Lord Swainton had appointed four o'clock for that purpose — and the clock struck four as Sir Edward entered the house. All were in dismay. Lord Clinemouth was endeavouring to calm Lady Arabella; but no one had gone for medical assistance. Sir Edward ran for aid, and in a few minutes two of the ablest men were at the side of his lordship.

"It is an apoplectic attack," said Doctor Minto.

"He has no pulse," added Doctor Brougham.

In reply to inquiries from Sir Edward, both the medical men expressed their apprehension, "that there was little hope of recovery."

Sir Edward inquired "if further advice would be desirable?" but both the physicians thought it would be unnecessary and unavailing.

The usual, and even unusual remedies were resorted to with promptitude and talent; and hopes were alternately raised and extinguished by the reports of the medical advisers.

Sir Edward advised Montague to see Lady

Arabella — to learn from her what were her wishes with respect to Scrope and her sisters, and to afford every assistance in his power.

Lady Arabella was distracted. She undoubtedly loved her father, and would deeply regret his loss; but her proposed marriage with Lord Clinemouth was not consummated — her father had made no will — the freehold estates would belong to Scrope — the settlement had not been signed, and the personal property of Lord Warminster and her father would have to be divided amongst many. She felt that she was entirely at the mercy of Scrope, whether he, as her brother, would ratify the engagements and promises of her father; and the marriage she had so much anticipated might not now be consummated at all. Lord Clinemouth endeavoured to calm her agitation; but medical assistance became necessary, and she was so fearfully convulsed that apprehensions were entertained even respecting her.

Lord Swainton gave some indications of life, and during a short time appeared to rally; but as his half-opened eyes saw, or fancied they saw, Sir Edward Clapperton, he simply uttered, in hesitating and stammering accents, "Beggars description!" and again sank back into a state of torpor.

Lady Muchberry was sent for. She arrived. She was by no means mistress of her feelings. She cursed herself—her ill fortune—her eternal disappointments — her present misery and woe, and had no note of commiseration or sympathy for others. She forgot where she was—so near the scene of alarming and dangerous illness. She raved as one mad. No remonstrances, no entreaties, no counsels, nothing could stop her vehement cries, lamentations, and bewailings. These were not for others — they were *all* for herself. Without religious or moral support or opinion, she had nothing to fall back upon but herself — and in herself she found nothing but remorse, disappointment, care, misery, helplessness, and ruin.

The Clappertons were greatly agitated. Lord Swainton had acted unwisely and wrong in making an offer of marriage to a young lady without apprising her that madness had existed in his family, and that he had been twice its victim; but they could not forget how many happy hours they had spent in his society; how, in times past they had looked forward to his return to their festive board, and how they had laughed by the hour together at his eccentricities, or at his most droll and peculiar exclamations. "Beggars description" had become

almost a classical phrase in their family; and now, to think that, perhaps in a few hours, or even minutes, he would be numbered with the dead, was too painful a thought to be endured without the most heart-rending grief. As to Sir Edward, he was as attentive and zealous as if he had been his lordship's son, and watched with deep anxiety for any favourable symptom or ray of hope. A few hours, however, decided the fearful conflict, and at a quarter before ten the same evening Lord Swainton expired.

"His lordship is no more," said Sir Edward, with great emotion, as he entered the drawing-room in Milsom Street. "A few minutes before his death reason seemed about to return, and he evidently recognized me. I think he said, 'I am very ill,' or 'am I very ill?' and gave me his hand. I pressed it warmly. He pressed mine; but in the very act, death seized him—or another attack—and ten minutes afterwards, he was a corpse."

Charlotte was deeply affected, and Montague was ill with emotion. He left that night for Wiltshire, to communicate to Scrope personally the awful intelligence, and to entreat him to ratify the conditions of his sister Arabella's marriage with Lord Clinemouth, by placing at her disposal the same amount of fortune.

Scrope was too noble a fellow to hesitate an instant. If he had only inherited a name and beggary from his father, he could not have been more grieved than now, when he found himself possessor of his vast estates. He was overwhelmed with sorrow; and when, three days after, he gazed on the corpse of his lordship, and saw those lips mute and cold which had once enlivened so many by their wit and playfulness, he shed bitter tears of sorrow and regret. Lord Swainton left in his son Scrope the representative of all that was excellent in his own character, with a thousand other virtues which his lordship had no right to claim. Scrope heard of the conduct evinced by the Clappertons with pleasure, but without surprise. "Sir Edward is a model of a man," he observed to Montague; "I never yet have seen one fault in him. I know my poor father thought most kindly of him to the last; for the day before he died I received this letter from him, in which he said, 'I am sorry, whenever I see Sir Edward in the streets, to think and feel that we are not intimate. He is the best-hearted man I ever met with. Beggars description!'"

The death of Lord Swainton once more delayed the departure of the Clappertons. Sir Edward became, in fact, till the arrival of

Scrope, the master of the house; for Lady Arabella was too ill, from sorrow and anxiety, to rise from her bed, and Lord Clinemouth was not so frequent in his visits till he knew Scrope's intentions with respect to the dowry of his sister. Lord Clinemouth had no sort of notion of "love in a cottage." Love in a palace? yes. Love in a castle? yes. But love in a cottage? no. The following letter to his father will explain his sentiments:—

"My dear Father,

"I have the most awful and distressing intelligence to communicate. It is the sudden and wholly unexpected death of Lord Swainton. He died last night of two apoplectic attacks; and Arabella is inconsolable. Scrope is expected in a couple of days. What he may do, I know not; but as death is the great revealer of all secrets, I must wait and see what will be revealed now. If it should reveal a ratification by Scrope of the engagements about to be entered into by his father — good: if not, the sooner I leave Bath the better, for marriage will be then out of the question. I think Arabella feels this must be my decision, and she has therefore sent off the Honourable Felix Montague to her brother. I trust, my dear father, that this

unfortunate intelligence will not interfere with your health, as it has done with the pleasures and amusements of

"Yours very affectionately,

"CLINEMOUTH."

The funeral of Lord Swainton, though not ostentatious, was splendid; and Sir Edward Clapperton was one of the unfeigned mourners who were present at the interment. Scrope was bowed down with sorrow. Title, estates, power, political influence, — all were nothing to him. He had lost his father,— and lost him in a manner so sudden and so unsatisfactory. Scrope was not a religious man, but he had a deep sense of the value of religion, and a horror of sudden deaths. His father had been more than a gay man. He had hoped to see him live to spend years of quietness and order. Scrope was accordingly most dejected and sad; and he would have prayed to Heaven rather to restore him his father, and to give him a firm hope that he would live to repent, and die in peace like a Christian, than to confer on himself his present title and property, had he not known that death is the great arbiter, and that prayers for the dead, or about the dead, are alike unavailing.

Lady Muchberry continued inconsolable. In expectation of her marriage with Lord Swainton, she had incurred expenses which now she could not defray,— had paid debts to prevent unpleasant observations, which she would otherwise have adjourned for years, and was known to all her Whig acquaintances as a woman who, in order to improve her fortunes, was willing to marry the half-mad Tory, Lord Swainton. She resolved quickly on the course she would pursue: the day after the burial of Lord Swainton, she proceeded to Southampton and Havre, and left her Bath lawyer the not very agreeable task of winding up her affairs, by paying six shillings in the pound. Of course the rest was to be paid thereafter, but the day and year were never mentioned.

Scrope acted with great generosity and honour to the whole of his family. Six months after Lord Swainton's death, Lady Arabella was married to Lord Clinemouth; Dorothy, Kate, and Amelia, were all provided for. The other sons of the late Lord Swainton had handsome annuities granted to them by their elder brother, out of the income of the freehold estates; and whoever now enjoys the privilege of his acquaintance, admits that he is an admirable and delightful specimen of an English nobleman.

It is now necessary to return to the Clappertons. The only acquaintance they regretted at Bath, on leaving that city, was Lady Charlotte Dowling. They feared that they should not see her often. So long as her father lived she could not leave him, unless she married, — and then she always said she should endeavour to persuade him to remove, and reside near her. Sir Edward expressed his deep regret at the separation. He was pleased that his sisters should form and keep up such acquaintances as her ladyship. They were rare indeed, — and especially at Bath. Not that Bath did not possess many high-principled, virtuous, and admirable women; but then they moved in less exalted ranks of society, and frequented less brilliant circles than those which himself and his sisters desired to frequent. The Miss Clappertons had hoped that their brother would have made her proposals of marriage; but Mrs. Catherwood said no more on the subject, and they were silent.

Once more the Clappertons found themselves at Clapham Hall. What changes had taken place since they left it! Lord Swainton was dead; Macfarlane was engaged to Lucy; Montague had fought a duel; Sophia was about to become his wife, and, at his father's death, Lady

Montague; Charlotte had nearly been Lady Swainton; Mr. Maplestone had left a fortune to the Clappertons; Morehouse was now more than half in love with Charlotte; and Sir Edward, who had been elected Tory member for Warnstable, had become more than three parts a Whig. Although madness, intrigue, and death had spoiled a portion of their season at Bath, events of the most striking character had thus changed all the features of their future existence, and opened new fields for speculation, doubt, and hope.

The sudden death of Lord Swainton threw a gloom for several weeks over the Clapperton family. Montague felt it more severely than all. He knew his lordship well. He excused him for many of his acts of apparent roguery or shuffling, because whenever he had money he was generous and noble. He knew that Lord Swainton was an extravagant man, but not on himself, or exclusively to gratify his own passions or tastes: that is to say, he was not a selfish man. He knew that his lordship was, for many years, a needy man, and had really lived by his wits; and although this necessity was the result of his former extravagance and generosity, still, the moment he possessed money of his own, he hastened to return all he

had acquired by doubtful or discreditable means. There were many acts of his lordship's which Montague found it difficult, if not impossible, to excuse. These he passed over, and set up against them opposing virtues. This was the only way of acting with such a character as that of his lordship. There was so much to blame, as well as to despise, that if he had not had vast redeeming excellences, he would have merited for many acts of some five or six years of his life, no other epithet than that of "a titled Jeremy Diddler," or "Jeremy Diddler raised to the peerage."

On the return of Sir Edward to London he became most attentive to his parliamentary duties—remained in the metropolis three nights out of seven—and when he was at Clapham Hall was surrounded by parliamentary associates and public men. Colonel Marchton, however, gave him up as a bad subject, or rather as a good-tempered, unsophisticated, but wholly unpolitical person.

"Your education has ruined you," said the colonel to Sir Edward, the last time the M.P. for Warnstable entered the Carlton. "If you were my son, I would send you to Oxford for three years, and then start you to the Continent. You are no more a Tory than I am a Radical.

All who know you must love you; but I see your end as clearly as I have done your beginning. You will become a Radical,—if you do not go further, and die a revolutionist. It is the natural tendency of trade to render men democratic."

As Sir Edward felt that Colonel Marchton was right, and that as Tory principles and Tory measures could not be appreciated or approved by him, he had no longer any business to go to the Carlton, — he struck out his name from the list of its members, and a few weeks afterwards was an applicant for admission to Brookes's.

CHAPTER X.

Vous êtes bien bon de vous occuper des grands hommes ; j'en ai vu de près deux ou trois ; c'étaient de sots personnages. PAUL LOUIS COURIER.

All tongues speak of him ; and the bleared sights
Are spectacled to see him. Bulks, windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and the ridges horsed
In earnestness to look on him.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE poor laws, and their demoralizing effect on the labouring poor, occupied much of public attention in the spring of 1830. The agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial classes, all complained of the daily increase of poor's rates, but yet no one proposed a remedy. The Tories ascribed the sufferings which existed to the principles of free trade, to a metallic currency, and to the low prices of agricultural produce; and they proposed the prohibitory system in commerce, an unrestricted paper currency, and high protective duties for the corn grower, as the only remedies. The Whigs pointed

to the national debt, as the great source of all the evils they admitted and deplored; and also to the fatal effects of the then existing poor laws, which tended to ruin the farmer, by the same system of expenditure which demoralized the labourer The reduction of the circulating medium, completed in 1828, they also insisted had doubled taxation, crippled industry, and contributed to augment the general perplexity and dissatisfaction.

"There are 13,000 individuals in Huddersfield, Sir Edward," exclaimed Morehouse, "who have not more than twopence-halfpenny per diem each, to live on; and out of this they have to find wear and tear for looms. The silk-weavers have destroyed machinery: I deplore it. But what are they to do? Taught by the Tories to despise political economy, they ignorantly attribute to machinery the misery and ruin which are the result of bad government and unjust and unnecessary wars. The over-taxation of all classes is the primary source of all the evils which afflict this country; and when, as now, such over-taxation is continued in the face of a bad harvest and a severe winter, who can wonder at the events of the last few months? It is all very well to establish a New Police; but neither the Duke's denial

of national distress, nor Sir Robert's police arrangements, will prevent the people's voices from being heard, which are all in favour of reform."

"I could not understand the conduct of Sir Edward Kentish," said Sir Edward Clapperton, "in separating himself from his party, by proposing 'that distress was general among all the productive classes of the community.' A majority of only 43 against that proposition was tantamount to the defeat of the Duke."

"The Tories are sick of the Duke," replied Morehouse. "The Whigs are so grateful to him for the cession of the Catholic claims that they are his supporters, rather than the Tories. The Duke has been plainly told by the chiefs of the Whig party that they are ready to come to his aid, provided the sweets of office are divided amongst them. Sir Francis Burdett is furious against the Duke. He accuses him 'of being shamefully insensible to the suffering and distress which are painfully apparent throughout the land.' Even Lord Eldon has become an opposition Lord. The Duke has lost his influence with the Tories. The Whigs are not yet prepared to make an alliance with the Radicals. The Duke still thinks he can go on without the Whigs. But the day is not

far distant when 'Reform' will sound the death knell to the aristocracy of the land."

Sir Edward Clapperton was often perplexed to know, when he heard these sweeping denunciations on the part of his friend Morehouse against the aristocracy, whether he belonged himself to that class of society, or not. He was rich and titled. He was an M.P., and of late had become a landowner. But was he an aristocrat? If so, how could he encourage any schemes which would destroy his own fortunes and hopes?

Sir Edward was introduced to Mr. Davenport. He was opposed to the ministry of the Duke. He demanded an inquiry into the state of the nation, and night after night did Sir Edward listen to the speeches of opposing statesmen. But Lord A—— and the Whigs, Mr. H—— and his political disciples, sided with the Duke and Sir Robert; and a majority of 255 to 87 gave a severe blow to those, who, like Mr. Morehouse, hoped to defeat the Tory cabinet. Although the Whig party offered no captious opposition to the government of the Duke, Sir James G—— attacked the system of salaries to government officers, and brought forward a motion for the consolidation of the treasurership of the navy with

some other office. Sir Edward was one of the 90 who supported him, and likewise voted for the abolition of the office of lieutenant-general of the ordnance.

"Still all this is mere moonshine," said Morehouse, when he congratulated Sir Edward on the result of the motion of Sir Robert Heron, for disallowing the pensions to the sons of two cabinet ministers. "We must follow this up by defeat upon defeat. We have defeated the Duke by a majority of 18, and yet he remains in office. He is not corrupt himself, but he clings to the system of corruption which he found in existence on arriving at power. We must cut down the pension-list at least 50 per cent., and not be satisfied with the repeal of the beer and leather duties. Look at the interest of the national debt. And who is most advantaged by it? The aristocracy of the country. The debt is the great wen; that is, the deadly drawback to all real improvement. We must get rid of that, by compelling the landed proprietors and wealthy merchants and manufacturers of the country to pay it off with their own capital and estates. Bankruptcy — yes, national bankruptcy, would be the best cure; but as the people are not prepared for that measure, the aristocracy of wealth must be com-

pelled to pay off this debt, and relieve the suffering millions from the grinding and awful results of over-taxation."

Nothing, however, which occurred during the spring of that year so much enraged Mr. Morehouse as the refusal of Sir Robert to transfer the elective franchise from East Retford to Birmingham, and his insisting on conferring it upon the hundred adjoining the disfranchised borough.

"This decision has advanced the cause of reform at least twelve months," said Mr. Morehouse; and Sir Edward fully concurred in that opinion.

Mr. John Hill was deeply convinced that before another year should have expired reform would be carried: "But a reform without revolution, without anarchy, without injustice." This was the reform which Sir Edward was prepared to support. He loved his position in society, and he wished to retain it; he had no notion of a division of property. He would cheerfully reduce taxation; and he desired nothing better than to see the poor happy; but then he wished all this effected by quiet, gradual, and parliamentary means. Whilst, therefore, he admired the ardour and impetuosity of Morehouse, he fell back with pleasure on the tran-

quillising and less hardy views of Mr. Hill. "Morehouse," said Sir Edward to Montague, "is the physician to point out the evil where the disease is, and to leave no doubt as to its character. But he is not the physician to prescribe the remedy. He resembles a surgeon who always directs amputation."

"The affair of East Retford is discreditable to humanity," exclaimed Morehouse, when discussing the merits of a petition presented by some electors to complain that for having voted for the liberal candidate they had received notices to quit from the agent of the greatest ducal proprietor in the neighbourhood: "the power arrogated by the duke resembles the tyranny of a slave-driver, rather than the proper influence of a nobleman and a landowner."

The day after this discussion Sir Edward met his former club-friend, Colonel Marchton. He was mad with delight.

"You have been gallantly beaten," exclaimed the colonel, "gallantly beaten indeed! 194 against 61! We have taught you a lesson, Sir Edward! We have taught you to interfere, indeed, with the right of an English nobleman to drive from his estates the ungrateful scoundrels who dared to disobey him. We have taught you all a pretty lesson, which I hope

you will ever remember, never to menace again the rights of private property. Property for ever! The aristocracy for ever! Wealth and the great landed proprietors for ever! Do not forget the numbers, Sir Edward! 194 against 61."

Sir Edward endeavoured to explain the reason of his vote to the ultra-Tory Colonel Marchton; but it was useless.

"Vote as you will, Sir Edward," interrupted the colonel, "we shall beat you, — always beat you; you have enlisted yourself in the ranks of a losing party. You will find this out too late. I hear you are thinking of Brookes's! Are you sure you will be elected? You have sown to the wind: you will reap the whirlwind."

"He is mad," thought Sir Edward, who had now been convinced by Morehouse that Toryism was insupportable by argument, and must therefore resort to threats, to menaces, to violence.

At length Lord John brought forward his measure for conferring the elective franchise on Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester. This was the signal for increased agitation amongst the new friends of Sir Edward.

Mr. Hill was delighted with the measure.

"Of all the numerous plans for altering our system of representation," said he, "whether suggested by an honest desire to obviate the necessity of sweeping innovations, or springing from the designs of restless demagogues, (like you, my dear Morehouse,) there are none against which so little can be said as the proposition for conferring the franchise on populous manufacturing towns. The present measure is founded on the known practice of Parliament, to extend such rights to unrepresented places, when they shall have acquired sufficient importance by their wealth and population. What can be more equitable than to confer on such places as Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham the right of returning members to Parliament? Such a proceeding as this is not capable of alarming the most timid, and ought to be received with joy by even the most determined enemies of all dangerous innovation. Look at France: a collision between royal authority and popular resistance is rapidly approaching. It is time for us to profit by the warning, and awaken to a perception of the nice mechanism of our own representative government. We, who are lovers of liberty without disorder, and of peace without slavery, must watch anxiously at such a period. We must endeavour so to

accommodate the system to altered times and circumstances, as to render it worthy of the respect and affection of the people. The constitution of this country supplies us with the means; we have only to use its renovating principles. Its fabric is not, as some seem to imagine, that of a Grecian temple, perfect and complete in all its parts, and which cannot suffer alteration without the destruction of its symmetry. No; it is more like a Gothic structure, susceptible of enlargement, consistently with the integrity of its ornaments and the security of its duration."

"Your project is a tub thrown out to the whale," said Morehouse. "Lord John is as opposed to real reform as Sir Robert. The bill will be rejected; but John Bull will be momentarily deceived into the belief that one step or one stride has been gained by the introduction of the measure. We do not want such reform as this. Huskisson is right when he says, that the time is fast approaching when Ministers will be compelled to come down to the House and propose such measures as these,—or resign. But these measures will be rejected. They will be rejected now by those who cannot and will not look into futurity. They will be rejected, then, by those who will not consent to

accept such mockeries as apologies for the past."

The next day they again met. The debate was ended,—the division had taken place,—and 188 votes against 140 had decided that Lord John's gradual plan of reform should not be adopted.

The session of 1830 had disappointed the Whigs, and Mr. Hill admitted their defeat. They had hoped that a joint administration might have been formed; that they might have introduced into the Tory cabinet a small portion of the leaven of reform; and that they might have been saved from the necessity of making that union with the Radicals which afterwards took place. They still, however, anticipated a change on the demise of the King; and although about the end of May, his Majesty became considerably better, a relapse soon occurred, and on the 25th June, 1830, he slept the sleep of death.

Sir Edward Clapperton was no longer an M. P. Five months of franking was all he had gained for the expenditure of upwards of 4500*l.* including, of course, the 4000*l.* laid out by Lord Swainton. The death of the monarch would soon put an end to all his greatness; and he was about once more to become plain Sir Ed-

ward Clapperton, with a new seat to look for, new electors to praise, flatter, and promise;—new chances to run,—new funds to expend,—new journeys to undertake,—and new risks to incur. Still, what would he be out of Parliament? what could he do? how could he pass his time? how hope to be looked upon with kindness by the new monarch and the new court? But to whom must he now apply for advice and direction? Lord Swainton, the ablest electioneerer in the universe, was no more. Morehouse was a rampant Radical. He had scarcely time to devote to Charlotte, and how little, then, could he spare for her brother? It was at this critical moment that Mr. John Hill and his friend Mr. Maxwell waited on Sir Edward. They had previously obtained for him an introduction to Brookes's. Once more they were willing to serve him. He had money. The Whigs had all to hope from Parliament, and but little from the Crown. The new monarch had made no immediate alteration in the government; for William the Fourth, after the usual oaths for the security of the Church of Scotland, and after having signed such instruments as were necessary at the commencement of a new reign, re-appointed the judges and other great officers of state to the places which

had become vacant, and signified to the members of the cabinet that he was anxious to retain their services. The Whigs, therefore, had now to look to Parliament. By the simple fact of the demise of the late monarch it was dissolved, and another must shortly assemble. Every vote, then, on the Whig side was of vast moment. A borough in a midland county, where Whig and Tory influence had for a long period been nearly equal, was brought under the consideration of Sir Edward by Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hill. No one without money could go there. It was proverbially corrupt,—so corrupt that it may be designated *Bribewell.* The Whigs could rely on the election of one candidate; but he was an old, tried friend of their party, Mr. Reader. The other seat would be sought for by Lord Reckless, the son of a Tory leader in the House of Lords, and who, with the first and second Whig candidates, must make up their minds to spend liberally, treat openly, and bribe shamefully. Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hill gave it as their opinion that Sir Edward might come in for 3000*l.*; but he must make common cause with Mr. Reader, the other Whig candidate; and if necessary, in order to secure his own return, must consent to pay a portion of Mr. Reader's expenses.

Sir Edward consulted his sisters. They did not hesitate an instant. "Remember, Edward," said Charlotte, "you have taken your stand in society: you must now maintain it. Sophia may become, in a short time, Lady Montague. Sir Felix told us to-day, that his father was so ill that it had been deemed necessary to call in further advice. On his death, Montague will be rich and powerful. I am really sorry that Sophia was not married last month, before Lord Montague was taken so ill. Not that I doubt Montague's attachment to Sophia; but only that it would have been much better that she should have been married to Sir Felix Montague, and then, on the death of her father-in-law, quietly stepped into the title of Lady. However, we will say no more of this now. But then look at myself. Morehouse is a parliamentary man. All his connexions are of that character. If we are married, how unpleasant it would be for you not to be in the House of Commons. You would be always meeting at our house the leaders of the opposition party, and you would be wretched to find yourself no longer a member. Oh, yes, my dear Edward, you must get into Parliament; place yourself, therefore, at once under the advice and aid of Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hill."

Sophia took another ground, though alike bearing on the affirmative. "You know, Edward," she observed, "when Charlotte and myself shall be married, it will be impossible for you to remain single. You must, then, marry. I hope and believe you will look high. You will ask some one in marriage of rank, fortune, great personal charms, and belonging to the *élite* of society. I am sure you will. But will not your success greatly depend on your parliamentary position? Will your title of Baronet alone ensure you a woman of rank and family? For my part, I think that men in Parliament are more looked up to than men of title. I know that this is Montague's opinion. Then, as to the expense of a seat in Parliament for several Parliaments to come, the fortune left you by Mr. Maplestone will far more than suffice; and I suppose that afterwards your wife's income will be appropriated by you to meet those expenses. It is certainly very unfortunate to have expended 4000*l.* for so short a period as five months; but let us hope that next time it will be much longer. This is the beginning of a new reign. The King is in good health, and there is every reason to believe that the new Parliament will be a long one."

Sir Edward acquiesced in the wisdom and

truth of these varied counsels; and the next day he waited on Mr. Hill and Mr. Maxwell, and expressed his determination to seek to aid the cause of "liberty without disorder, and of peace without slavery," by becoming a candidate for the borough of *Bribewell.*

In order to enjoy as much as possible of the society of Sophia, Montague had taken a cottage in the neighbourhood of Clapham Common for the summer months. Sophia was supremely happy. As to Captain Macfarlane, he had imitated the example set him by Montague, but in a more humble manner; for he had only gone into lodgings; but often did they all meet at Clapham Hall, talk with delight of bygone days, lament the death of Lord Swainton, form plans for future happiness, and enjoy the splendid sunsets of the enchanting spot where the Clappertons resided. Lucy was about being married to the captain. A cottage, with clematis, woodbine, rustic chairs, Swiss ornaments, a *jet d'eau*, and other attractions, was selected as their future dwelling; and the Clappertons and Montague spent much of their time in assisting her with their advice, or in aiding her in making the necessary arrangements in her garden. One recommended the purchase of a few artificial rocks, to be

gracefully and tastefully placed in the centre of the grass-plot; another admired large shells distributed "in the eastern style" amongst the parterres; a third insisted upon ivy for the side of the cottage exposed to the north-east wind;—and so on, whilst the captain was enchanted,—"offered no opinion," —"left everything to the superior taste of the ladies,"—and smiled all day at Lucy, and dreamt all night of blue-eyed cherubs and beauteous children, who called him papa, and his fair one their mother. The captain cared neither for France nor Prince Polignac; for the Duke nor Lord John; for public discontent or public anxiety; or for Tories, Whigs, or Radicals. "Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few," was one of the wise saws of the captain.

"Oh! who do you think is dead, Sir Edward?" asked Montague, as he read through the Births, Deaths, and Marriages, in the Post.

"I have no idea," he replied; "no one, I hope, I care for."

"Not at all," said Montague; "but, I believe, you have some regard for his daughter."

"What! Lord Dowling?" exclaimed Sir Edward.

"Even so," replied Montague. "Died the

day before yesterday, in the sixty-fourth year of his age."

"Dear Lady Dowling," said Charlotte, "how I do love her!"

"Sweet creature!" added Sophia, "what trouble she must be in! I wish we were with her, to console and cheer her."

"You must write to her immediately," said Sir Edward; "and I beg you will express for me my most sincere sympathy and my most heartfelt condolence."

"You may be sure of that," said Charlotte, to whom these observations had been addressed. "I know something."

"Well, what do you know, you little sly-boots?" inquired Sir Edward.

"Oh, that's a secret!" replied Charlotte; "but what will you give me to tell it you, Edward?"

"Not one pin's head, my dear," said her brother.

"Then you shall not know, Edward, rely on that."

"Then I must remain ignorant, my dear, till it is your pleasure to tell me. But I must make a call on Colonel Dawson. He wishes to see me."

"Stop, Edward!" said Charlotte; "come

to me and I will whisper the secret in your ear."

Sir Edward approached her, and his sister whispered quite loud enough for every one to hear, "I wish, Edward, that you would make an offer to Lady Charlotte. Think what a sweet, delightful creature she is! And now she is wealthy as well as titled; and an angel into the bargain!"

"Amen—amen—amen!" cried Sophia; and Montague said, "Bravo! bravo! bravo! Long live Lady Charlotte Dowling!"

"For ever!" said Sir Edward; and he left the room to proceed on his visit.

"What did he say?" asked Charlotte of Sophia, hardly able to trust her own ears.

"Why, he said *for ever!*" replied her sister; "but what does he mean by that? Did he mean, may she *ever* remain Lady Charlotte Dowling? Or did he mean to indicate that he partook our opinions?"

"Why the last, to be sure," said Charlotte.

"I am not quite certain of that," observed Montague. "Sir Edward is as open as the day on every other subject than his own marriage; but of that he says nothing."

The same evening, Morehouse, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Maxwell dined with Sir Edward. The con-

versation turned on the declaration made by the Duke of R——, "that the government of the Duke of Wellington was a government of mere expediency, full of vacillating proposals, and never daring to propose and support measures on their own proper grounds;" then, on the withdrawal of support from Earl Grey; on the lecture given by Mr. Huskisson to Sir Robert on the subject of consistency, and on the language used by Henry Brougham, who had told Sir Robert that he was "among the flatterers and fawning parasites of the Duke of Wellington." In the House of Lords the Duke had, indeed, a large majority; but Lords Harrowby, Winchelsea, and Eldon, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Londonderry, Earl Mansfield, and Lord Wharncliffe, one after another opposed him; and in the House of Commons the ministerial address was only carried by forty-six.

"Now or never!" said Morehouse. "The Duke is defeated; but who will succeed him?"

"An old Whig administration," replied Mr. Hill, "whose motto will be 'wise, temperate, and timely reform.'"

"The people will not submit to an old Whig cabinet," said Mr. Morehouse.

"What do you mean by *the people?*" asked Mr. Hill, with rather more than his accustomed

warmth. "If you mean, Mr. Morehouse, the industrious, labouring, manufacturing classes, as well in the country as in the towns; if you mean the middling classes,—the bulk of the nation,—you are wrong. But if you mean by *the people* the non-industrious classes, those who wish to live without working, and to enjoy ease and happiness without effort; if you mean the dogmatic declaimers in favour of equal property, as well as equal rights,—your opinion may be correct."

"By *the people*, I mean all males of twenty-one years and upwards, paying or not paying taxes, working or not working, but not receiving parochial relief," said Mr. Morehouse; "and if these all voted by ballot to-morrow, your Lord Grey and his Whiglings would never come into office."

"So that your system is universal suffrage and the ballot?"

"Yes," replied Morehouse; "and triennial parliaments. And do what you will—carry what you will—patch up your old constitution as you will—make yearly and temporary concessions as you will—follow up Lord John's late bill as you will—until universal suffrage, the vote by ballot, and triennial Parliaments shall be established, you will never have per-

manent peace or lasting institutions. You may gain time—the bankrupt's last hope; you may postpone the day of settlement—the insolvent's last prayer; but the day of settlement *will* come. The people will not always consent to pay taxes not voted by their own representatives. The Whigs will not always meet by their promises and their shufflings the demands of the mass. A few years more or less are nothing in the life of a nation. But be sure of this, the time will come when universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and triennial parliaments will be, not conceded to, but enforced by the people."

"Then you would prefer the Duke of Wellington to Earl Grey, I presume," said Mr. Hill, "though those who in my opinion know best the intellect, honour, and integrity of the real people of this country, declare that illustrious as the services of the Duke have been, he must not suppose that the people of England will submit to him as their ruler, if the only condition on which he will consent to trample on them, is the retention of such colleagues as Lords A——, E——, and L——. The Duke has a notion, and it is no longer a secret, that he is able to govern the country as sole minister. This will not be endured. The colleagues

of the Duke are insufficient without *him*; but he wishes to act without *them*."

Mr. Morehouse observed "that neither the Duke nor Earl Grey would satisfy the people. No *sham* reform would content the nation then. Half measures might have appeased it once, but it was now too late," and he proposed in a warm and impassioned speech, "The cleansing of the Augean stable."

The party was a merry one! The character of the borough of *Bribewell* was well discussed. The chances of Sir Edward as second Whig candidate examined. And it was finally resolved that Mr. John Hill, who had no intention of becoming a candidate himself for that or any other place, should conduct all the preliminary arrangements.

The borough of *Bribewell* was divided into two parties — the invoters and the outvoters. These were again divided into three sham political classes, calling themselves Tories, Whigs, and Radicals. Not that the men amongst them either knew or cared anything about Toryism, Whiggism, or Radicalism; but by having a show of partisanship, they deluded the candidates, and made one after the other believe that the electors of Bribewell had really political creeds, political tastes, political opinions, and even

political convictions. The mayor and aldermen were quite as corrupt, ignorant, and base as the freemen; though, if anything, the outvoters were worse than the resident freemen.

In a low part of London, at a vulgar and dirty public house, the outvoters had been accustomed to assemble; not only during the time of an election, or before or after that period, but all the year round, and every year. When an election was over, they met to receive their bribes; and to find out some means, if possible, of unseating the member they had just returned. Their motive for so acting was obvious. If they could unseat him, there would be another election, and that would lead to new treating, to new dinners and suppers, and above all to new travelling expenses, and to new payments for their votes. They sold their votes at 4*l.* per head, single votes, and 8*l.* for plumpers. They expected half their travelling expenses to be paid them before leaving London, and the other half on their arrival. The price for their votes it was customary to deposit with three of their agents, who divided the spoil when the election was over, unless, indeed, and this had sometimes happened, the three agents had set off with the booty, and never been heard of more. The resident voters received the same price

as their non-resident brethren; and voted right or left,—for A or for B,—as might be deemed, by the divers committees of the various candidates, most conducive to their own personal interests, and best calculated to secure a long contest, and the expenditure of a vast deal of money. Before the commencement of an election, but when one was probable, they looked out for candidates; sought for the wealthiest and the most indolent; had a great aversion to clever men; and rather looked out for noodles and simpletons. Out of about five hundred voters, one hundred were non-residents, and the travelling expenses were put down by them at *5l.* each. Each outvoter then had *5l.* for his expenses, and *4l.* for his vote from each candidate for whom he voted; and very often, indeed, they received the travelling expenses from even three or four candidates, promising to vote for each one who paid them. The price of their *votes* they could only receive from two candidates, since they were not paid for them until after the election was over; and copies of the polling books, made on the hustings, supplied, as a matter of course, the names of the candidates for whom they had voted. Besides these expenses and bribes, the candidates had to defray their expenses at the inns, hotels,

public-houses, and lodging-houses during the days of polling. Before the election,—during the election,—and after the election, all these houses were "open," and the most revolting waste and extravagance were perpetrated in order to "bleed" the candidates, and enrich the borough, until similar scenes and a new election should again occur. When the election was over, and all was paid, seldom amounting to less than from 4,000*l.* to 5,000*l.*, then the out-voters met, as before hinted at, to seek by chicanery, lying, perjury, and every despicable scheme and plot, either to worry the candidate to resign by threatening exposure, and prosecution for bribery; or to weary him by applications for pecuniary relief and other aid, at every hour of the day; or to annoy him by an endless number of petitions for offices and places in the India House, at the Docks, in the Bank, or under Government. Sometimes the newly elected member became disgusted, and gave up his seat. At other times he remained firm. Then they met to devise new means and plans of persecution or extortion, and resorted to advertisements or paragraphs in the newspapers. When all this would not succeed, then they threatened him with petitions to Parliament to unseat him on the most

frivolous and stupid pretexts. If even these were treated with contempt, and they saw no hope of "frightening him from his propriety," then they fawned and flattered, wrote affecting letters of detailed suffering and pretended want, and sought to touch his heart. If these succeeded, he soon received an abundance of them. If they failed, they annoyed him; sent him live rats from the country; forwarded detonating powder in letters. If these were useless, they threatened him that he should never be returned again; and invited, two years beforehand, some new man to come forward against the next general election. The new man they robbed till the Parliament was on the eve of dissolution, and then they got other candidates richer than himself, oftener forsook him after having induced him to spend many hundred pounds in feasting and fattening them; and, finally, acted over again the same treating, the same bribery, and the same gross cheating and tricking during the election and after it had terminated.

This is a fair, honest, unexaggerated picture of Bribewell and its electors. There was scarcely one honest man in the borough; and never had been, when Mr. Hill and Mr. Maxwell advised Sir Edward to try his good luck; not that many

excellent men had not been its members, for several had been in the course of its past history; but Bribewell was a deplorable sink of bribery and corruption. That which it was then, it is still. There are no longer the wretched outvoters, it is true; but the resident electors are more numerous; and bribing, treating, and profligacy of all sorts, are as common as before.

At length the 23rd July, 1830, arrived. His Majesty went in state to the House of Lords, where the Commons with their speaker were assembled; and Sir Edward, after having listened to a most gracious speech from King William, heard that Parliament prorogued of which he had been a member six months, and which was next day dissolved by proclamation, and a new one convoked for the 14th September.

"And now for *Bribewell!*" exclaimed Sir Edward; and to Bribewell he went.

CHAPTER XI.

Cato made no distinction of times or things; no allowance for the weakness of the republic, and the power of those who oppressed it. In an age, therefore, of the utmost libertinism, when the public discipline was lost and the Government tottering, he struggled with the same zeal against all corruption, and waged perpetual war with a superior force.—MIDDLETON.

A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides —like a leather jerkin.

Troilus and Cressida.

SIR EDWARD CLAPPERTON had attended two meetings of the outvoters of Bribewell before the Parliament was dissolved. He perceived a vast difference between those of Warnstable and those he was then canvassing. The Warnstable electors were not averse either to treating or bribing, but their language and habits were less grossly revolting; and some sort of attention was paid by them to the political opinions of the candidates. At one of the meetings of the outvoters of Bribewell, a leader, James Cartwright, a small mercer by trade, but relying

chiefly on what he made of his low election tricks and canvassing talents for his support, was deputed by his sham Radical associates to propose to Sir Edward the following questions:—

Q.—Well, Sir Edward, so you are a Whig candidate, eh?

A.—Precisely so; but above all "the poor man's candidate."

Q.—I believe you were the Tory candidate at Warnstable?

A.—It is of very little importance what I was at Warnstable; but I was there what I am at Bribewell, "the poor man's candidate."

Q.—Are there any seats then in the House of Commons for poor men's candidates, Sir Edward? or do all members either vote for or against the Government, and sit on the ministerial or on the opposition benches accordingly?

A.—To be candid with you, my friend, I have changed my opinions! I am better acquainted now with the nature and bearings of Toryism than I was when candidate at Warnstable. I perceive that the country will not consent to be governed militarily, or by a soldier, and that reform of Parliament must be granted.

Q.—I think you were elected about six months since, Sir Edward, as Tory candidate?

A.—About that time.

Q.—What is your opinion now about free trade?

A.—I am favourable to the principle, but then there must be a reciprocity on the part of other nations.

Q.—Are you also an advocate for the repeal of all duties on foreign corn?

A.—I am in principle; but how the measure would work, I am not prepared to say. I am favourable to a cheap loaf, cheap meat, and cheap beer.

Q.—Very good, Sir Edward; but how can the farmer sell cheap flour, or cheap corn, if he shall continue to pay such enormous rents for his land?

A.—It would undoubtedly be very difficult, but there is no cure for this but in the reduction of the rent of land.

Q.—Do you believe that a cheap loaf would lead to a diminution in the price of wages?

A.—I do not believe that it would; but this is a question I have not yet looked to so closely as I propose doing.

Q.—What is your plan then for relieving the poorer classes in this country?

A.—I would diminish taxation; admit foreign corn at a small fixed duty; repeal all taxes pressing on the labouring classes; and secure these advantages permanently to the people, by conferring on them the right of electing members of Parliament.

"Good! good!" cried the principal part of the creatures present; and many of them promised their vote to Sir Edward. If, however, he had answered wholly differently, provided he had spoken boldly and decidedly, they would have cried "good! good!" and promised him their votes, just the same. They were wholly unable to reason, but had a certain number of questions which they generally proposed to all candidates. This was a part of their system of trickery. They sought to convince the candidates that they took a *real* interest in the political opinions of those who applied to represent them in Parliament, and too frequently succeeded in duping them.

Sir Edward was accompanied to Bribewell by Mr. John Hill, Sir Felix Montague (whose father's health was improved), Captain Macfarlane, and George Catherwood. Sir Edward's colours were this time white and purple, and his reception was fully equal to that he experienced at Warnstable. On arriving at Bribe-

well, he found that Mr. Reader, the old Whig candidate, had secured a great many votes. He was the first in the field. He spoke well, canvassed admirably, had a great deal of tact and *finesse*, and was skilled in parliamentary business.

Lord Reckless was the corporation candidate. He had arrived at Bribewell on the previous day. He was a zealous Tory. He had contrived to offend the Dissenters in his opening speech by confounding their claims with those of the Roman Catholics; and it was useless, therefore, for him to apply to the dissenting portion of the electoral body, or at least to those amongst the Dissenters who were honest and conscientious.

"Speak a good word for the Dissenters," said Mr. Reader's agent to Sir Edward, "for Lord Reckless has offended them."

"What do the Dissenters want?" inquired Sir Edward.

"I don't know, I am sure," replied the agent: "but it is only necessary to say that whilst you are attached to the Church of England, you are nevertheless a friend to civil and religious liberty, and will cheerfully investigate all the grievances of which Dissenters complain, with a view to their removal."

"I can say that conscientiously," observed

Sir Edward; "and if the Dissenters will be pleased with such a declaration, I shall be most happy to make it."

Sir Edward arrived at the market-place. His carriage drew up, and the congregated hundreds called "Silence!"

Sir Edward made a plain, good, honest, sensible speech, in which he declared, "that he had changed some of his political opinions; that he was satisfied the aristocracy must yield to the cry for Reform; that he hoped, however, such reform would be wise and gradual; and that he desired to see the poor man with a 'cheap loaf,' but the farmer protected, and the foreigner brought to act on the principles of reciprocity, and not to receive all advantages in the shape of a reduction of duties on the importation of their produce into Great Britain, without granting a corresponding reduction on their import duties upon British manufactured goods when carried to their shores."

"That's all very well, Master Clapperton," said a strong, broad-backed, round-shouldered, strapping farmer, whose age could not have been much more or less than forty; "we have heard a good many of you young fellows the last twenty years. You belong to the Church, but you are favourable to Dissenters. You

wish well to the agricultural interests, but you are an advocate for a cheap loaf. You are determined to protect the farmers, but you wish to admit foreign corn. You speak up for the manufacturers and landowners in the same breath, and would wish us to believe that their interests can be made to work together. But we must have an end to this nonsense. Are you for the farmers? or are you for the manufacturers? Now let 's have a plain answer."

"I am for both," replied Sir Edward; "and desire most ardently the prosperity of both."

"Then you are a humbug!" said the farmer; who had scarcely uttered the phrase before a basket-full of rotten eggs were pelted at poor Sir Edward, spoiling the new lining of his carriage, as well as the coats and hats of the candidate and his friends.

The farmer was an adherent of Lord Reckless; and this trick was resorted to, to cover with disgrace, if possible, the new Whig candidate on his arrival, and prepare the way for his defeat.

"I shall be at the head of the poll," cried Sir Edward most good-temperedly, when the shower of rotten eggs had ceased; and as some one had approached the carriage and informed him that Lord Reckless had enjoyed the fun

from the windows of his hotel, he turned towards that hotel, and exclaimed, "Let those laugh who lose: those will who win."

"You are a fine-tempered fellow!" shouted the farmer, who had been the real leader of this rotten-egg assault; "and if I split my votes, you shall have one of them."

"Thank you for one," said Sir Edward; "but *two* would be better."

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the members of the corporation, who were standing under the porch of the Town Hall. "You 've let the cat out of the bag, Master Clapperton,—Master Rat, Master Turncoat:—so you have made a coalition with Reader! No coalition here!—'Birds of a feather flock together.'—You had better drive to the George Inn at once, and divide your expenses. No coalition! You want two votes, eh? one for you, and one for Reader."

Sir Edward had uttered an unfortunate phrase for such a place as *Bribewell*, where he who spent most was invariably loved most, and where anything like coalition was always regarded as akin to economy.

"You must deny all coalition," whispered Mr. Hill; "for in reality there is none."

"There is no coalition!" exclaimed Sir Edward. "Undoubtedly I wish well to Mr. Rea-

der, as an able and enlightened man; but there is no coalition between us. I came not to canvass for him, but for myself. Our committees, our purses, our hotels, are all separate, —all wholly distinct; and, doubtless, on some questions we do not even think alike. But remember my last word before I retire to my inn, is,—*There is no coalition!*"

These declarations of Sir Edward were comparatively of no value. He had been unfortunate enough to have asked for both votes, which was interpreted to mean that his friends would vote for Mr. Reader, and that Mr. Reader's friends would vote for him. Lord Reckless and the corporation got out a large posting-bill in less than an hour, in red, black, and green letters,

LORD RECKLESS AND THE FARMERS
FOR EVER!
NO COALITION!

The Dissenters soon forgot the incivilities of Lord Reckless; for above and before all things they were *all* inhabitants of Bribewell! It was the first and dearest interest of them all to prevent coalition. Their interest, as tavern-keepers, shop-keepers, public-house-keepers and tradesmen were the same. They wished to have as

many candidates as possible, all distinct from each other, all bribing and treating to their utmost, all throwing away shillings and half-crowns among the poor, and all thus aiding to keep up a vigorous and money-spending contest.

"I am afraid that unfortunate word of yours, Sir Edward, may lose you your seat," said Mr. John Hill, after two hours' canvass, during which they were everywhere met by the reply of "No Coalition!" "I think there is but one course to take. We must give another turn to your unlucky observation, and insist that you intended by it to ask for *plumpers*. We must say, that when the farmer offered to give you *one* vote, and you replied, 'Thank you for *one*, but *two* would be better,' that you intended to say, 'I should be still more obliged for *plumpers!*' We must meet the posting bill of the Reckless people by a placard of our own; and taking his pencil he sketched the following:—

No Coalition!
Plumpers for Clapperton,
The Poor Man's Friend!

This manœuvre succeeded. The cry of "No Coalition!" ceased, and when the canvass was terminated, the Committee expressed themselves tolerably sure of success.

The day of election arrived. Bribewell looked gay. A new candidate at the last hour made his appearance. He arrived at eight in the morning as the election commenced at nine. Who should it be but — Colonel Marchton!

Lord Reckless was his friend. The colonel had been defeated in Lincolnshire, and had just time to arrive at Bribewell. Lord Reckless was so satisfied of his own return, through possessing the support of the corporation, that he had resolved with it to bring his friend the colonel into the field. Lord Reckless was ignorant, wholly ignorant, of electioneering matters; but he was fully satisfied that two Tory candidates could succeed, and he was rather encouraged in that belief than otherwise by the artful, money-loving, bribery-loving members of the corporation. Instead of counselling him not to risk his own election by bringing forward another candidate, they assured him, "that perhaps at this stage of the business it would secure his return." Thus Colonel Marchton had been got down from London in the course of the night, and appeared an hour after his arrival as a Tory candidate. He was both surprised and vexed at seeing himself the opponent of Sir Edward Clapperton. He understood that

Mr. Reader was the Whig candidate, and Lord Reckless the Tory one, and that it was the opinion of the corporation that provided a third Tory candidate should appear two Tories might be returned. This was the story told him by the deputation of in and out-voters, who had found him the previous evening only just returned to London from defeat in Lincolnshire.

Sir Edward Clapperton could not at first understand the arrival of Colonel Marchton. He would not believe that he was a fourth candidate till he heard the fact from his own lips; but the colonel assured him that, if he had known it was to oppose so kind and good-hearted, though wrong-headed a fellow, he would not have gone down to Bribewell.

The nomination proceeded. The speeches were made. The four candidates were there. The mayor declared that on the show of hands the majority was in favour of Lord Reckless and Colonel Marchton. Of course a poll was demanded by Mr. Reader and Sir Edward Clapperton, and the next morning it commenced at nine. As it was evident, too evident to admit of contradiction, that a coalition had been formed between Lord Reckless and Colonel Marchton, it was resolved by the committees and friends of the Whig candidates to resort to the same

measure; and during the night the walls of the town were covered with bills.

VOTE FOR READER AND CLAPPERTON,
THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE!

From that moment the contest was between *Toryism* and *Whiggism*, at least so far as *such* a contest could be carried on in *Bribewell.*

The first day the polling moved on slowly; it was to the interest of the borough not to proceed quickly, but to keep open the poll to the very last moment. The result was as follows:—

FIRST DAY.

Reckless.	Marchton.	Reader.	Clapperton.
140.	138.	136.	140.

On the second day the *out-voters* polled, and then the total numbers on the first and second days' polls were,—

FIRST AND SECOND DAYS.

Reckless.	Marchton.	Reader.	Clapperton.
195.	194.	190.	191.

"Three hundred and eighty-six electors have voted," said Mr. Hill, to the joint committees of Reader and Clapperton. "There are just one hundred and fourteen more to vote. Of these, I understand, twenty-four cannot possibly at-

tend; and that ten more are doubtful. Let us examine with attention the votes at prior elections of each of those who have not yet voted, and see which were the candidates they supported."

"You need not trouble yourself, Mr. Hill, to go into that examination," observed the chairman of Mr. Reader's committee. "I will bet you a new hat that they all voted for the candidate who paid them best. We know them all. The wheels must be greased, or we shall not get up hill."

"Grease away," said Sir Edward, "and put as many new horses to the *sovereign* coach as are necessary."

"Money alone is not sufficient," replied Mr. Hill. "Colonel Marchton I know well. I see he has been defeated in Lincolnshire. He must come into Parliament somehow or other if possible, and, with four a-head, he will be encouraged to lay out whatever may be required. We must win this election, gentlemen; but it must be by a manœuvre. I take it for granted that these seventy electors who have not voted are all poor?"

"Nearly all," replied Mr. Reader's chairman.

"And I presume they all desire Government places?"

"Of course," replied all present.

"Then the government must be changed to-morrow! The news must be brought in by the long coach, which arrives about noon, and that will settle the business. They will soon find out that it is their interest to vote for Whig candidates then."

All present were delighted at the scheme, and of course all were bound to secresy.

"The news must come from third parties apparently uninterested in the conflict," said Mr. Hill; "but if two gentlemen will come forward and help me, we will soon make all our arrangements."

The next day at noon the numbers were declared as follows: — Colonel Marchton's money had been scattered far and wide; and Sir Edward Clapperton's bank-notes had not been less industriously circulated.

THIRD DAY, 12 o'clock.

Reckless.	Marchton.	Reader.	Clapperton.
230.	228.	231.	230.

"Neck-and-neck," whispered Sir Edward to Mr. Hill; "it will be a close run."

"In an hour hence we shall have won the battle or lost it," replied Mr. Hill. "There comes the long coach: it changes horses in

three minutes; but those three minutes will be fatal to one or the other party."

"The Duke of Wellington's out," said the coachman to the landlord of the inn, where Colonel Marchton had taken up his head-quarters. "A second edition of The Times announced it this morning; but a gentleman who stopped at —— begged me to sell it him for a crown, or I would have brought it on."

"What's that you say?" asked Mr. Hill, who had left the hustings purposely, according to previous arrangement, to hear all that passed.

The coachman repeated the sentence; and then, as the horses were harnessed, drove off.

The news spread like wildfire. The agents and committees of Reader and Clapperton ran everywhere about the town, and for half an hour all polling ceased; but it soon began again: and in vain did the Tory candidates look for another suffrage. At four o'clock precisely the poll closed, and the following numbers were read:—

Close of the Poll.

Clapperton.	Reader.	Reckless.	Marchton.
253.	250.	230.	229.

"Clapperton for ever!" cried the very men who had voted against him the preceding day.

"Reader for ever!" shouted those who, thinking the Whigs were in, now sought to reconcile themselves to those whom they believed were the new ministerial candidates.

Colonel Marchton did not know whether he stood on his head or his heels. Lord Reckless was convinced that they had been jockeyed. The coaches, which left at noon and in the afternoon, brought no intelligence of the change of ministry. The next day's post opened all their eyes to the delusion; for not a word was to be found in The Times or any other paper.

The corporation was furious. Colonel Marchton's hotel-keeper was, however, the first who had heard the news. "Doubtless," he said, "the coachman had been imposed on: for a more civil, honest, obliging fellow he had never known." It was too late then to prevent the consequences. The Whig candidates had been elected. Sir Edward and Mr. Reader were chaired; Lord Reckless and Colonel Marchton promised to contest the borough the next time; and Sir Edward returned to Clapham Hall *Whig member for Bribewell!*

Nothing could exceed the delight of the Miss Clappertons; but Sophia was grieved to learn that Lord Montague, who had suddenly rallied, and appeared likely to live for years at the time

Sir Felix left London for Bribewell with their brother, had been taken much worse, and would, it was feared, not survive many days. Montague remained only a few hours at Clapham Hall, and left for the seat of his father, not far from London. He arrived in time to see him before he expired; but the next day Sophia received a letter apprising her that his lordship was no more, and that Montague was now a peer, wealthy and powerful.

"You will be Lady Montague," said Charlotte to Sophia, with some emotion, "and I only Mrs. Morehouse. You were to have been Mrs. Montague, and I Lady Swainton."

Sir Edward decided on placing his whole establishment in mourning, and Lord Montague was gratified at the compliment.

A few days after the return of Sir Edward to Clapham Hall, Macfarlane called to announce to him his approaching marriage with Lucy. Sophia was entreated to become one of the bridesmaids; but, as the late Lord Montague had only just been buried, and as his son and successor to his title had not yet called at Clapham Hall, Sir Edward feared it would be thought indelicate. All the Clappertons, however, were present at her marriage, and she looked beautiful, lovely, and happy. Sir Edward presented

her with a massive gold chain, and Charlotte and Sophia were not behindhand with their handsome and valuable gifts. Macfarlane and Lucy left for Tunbridge Wells, roamed for six weeks amidst the enchanting scenery of that still gay and delightful watering-place, and returned towards the end of autumn to their pretty cottage, full of cheerful thoughts, pleasant hopes, and agreeable reminiscences.

The events which had transpired in France gave new hopes and new energy to the Whig party; they greatly influenced the elections in England. The question of parliamentary reform was now brought forward in all circles, and on all occasions. Meetings, petitions, and addresses followed with rapidity, and the former plan of transferring the privileges of a corrupt borough to an unrepresented place, or giving the elective franchise to a populous town, was utterly discarded, and even ridiculed.

"What do you think of affairs now, Sir Edward?" asked Morehouse, triumphantly, when he visited Clapham Hall for the first time after being returned for a large city in the west of England. "What do you think now of Mr. Hill's gradual and quiet measures? — of his parliamentary system of progressive improvement?

Before the new Parliament will meet all England will be in commotion."

"I fear so, indeed, my dear Morehouse," replied Sir Edward; "but I confess I do not see what we shall gain by uproar."

"Oh, you don't, — don't you? Then I do," said Morehouse. "We shall gain a *bonâ fide* representation, a Radical House of Commons."

"You march too quickly, my dear Morehouse," replied Sir Edward; "national reforms are not so rapid."

"Indeed — indeed!" exclaimed Morehouse. "Look at France,— a revolution in three days! The people of this country will submit no longer. If our rights are refused, we shall have a general convulsion; and the privileged orders will be forced to yield what we now require of them."

"Why, that is little short of sedition," said Sir Edward.

"Never mind that, it is truth," replied Morehouse; and the conversation was continued for more than an hour.

Though Morehouse was an extraordinary sort of lover, he was a man of strong passions and quick resolve. He was the worst possible man to make love; but few loved more

ardently or firmly than himself. Charlotte admired his talents, thought him the most eloquent man in conversation she had ever met with or heard of, and had no reason to doubt his affection for her. Still, she feared that his ultra politics might confine her to democratical society, and might exclude from her house many of the *élite* of the fashionable world. But yet he was a wealthy man, could not have any real interest in agitation, must lose by commotion or revolt, and appeared to enjoy the good things of this world too well to hope or desire seriously a national bankruptcy.

The quiet good sense of Charlotte was what Morehouse most desired and admired. He would not have married a female politician, or a blue-stocking, not if she had possessed the largest income in Europe. A wife was, in his opinion, a social and a moral, but not a literary and philosophical, companion. He could not bear a dunce, either male or female; but he was still more averse to authoresses and literary women. Nor was he sorry that she was rather conservative in her politics.

"It is much more respectable for a woman to be conservatively inclined," said Morehouse to Sir Edward, when conversing on the character of Lady Charlotte Dowling: "a woman

ought to be fond of antiquity, of ruins, of past generations, of nature, and of her home, with all its past and quiet associations. Madame Roland is one of my horrors: I prefer even Marie Antoinette to her. I hate Charlotte Corday, Joan of Arc, and Herodias's daughter: they are my abominations. A woman has always enough of excitement in attending to the duties and graces which belong to her sphere."

These sentiments were perfectly in harmony with those of Charlotte herself; and she was enchanted to learn that she would not be expected to be a politician.

Charlotte and Sophia had always hoped and desired that they should be married on the same day; but this was no longer probable. The forms and ceremonies of society, as well as the affections and feelings of the heart, dictated to Lord Montague the propriety of postponing, for at least six months, his marriage with Sophia; whilst Morehouse desired to be married in time to make an excursion with his bride to Paris, and return to the British metropolis before the opening of the new Parliament. This was a sad disappointment to Sophia; but Cupid laughs at sisters as well as at locksmiths; and The Post informed the numerous friends of Mr. Morehouse in its fashionable intelligence, "that

the honourable member for —— was about to conduct to the hymeneal altar the eldest sister of the member for Bribewell."

The marriage was celebrated with more pomp than could have been expected would have been approved by a Radical M.P.; but Mr. Morehouse was a lover of democracy more in theory than in practice, — or at least in practice in social life. He was no leveller. He held it to be not only lawful, but expedient and necessary to *threaten* to destroy and overturn, in order to induce or alarm the aristocracy into concessions; but he admired the revolution of July, in Paris, 1830, not less for its exemption from the crime of pillage, than for its moderation to the members of the expulsed eldest branch of the House of Bourbon. Clapham Hall was the scene of much mirth and gaiety on the marriage of Charlotte. Maria Catherwood was amongst the guests, as well as one of the bridesmaids. Lord Montague was one of the witnesses of the ceremony, and not the least lively in the festivities which succeeded. Sir Edward gave his sister away. He did so with pleasure and confidence. He knew Morehouse was an honest and kind-hearted being, who, though often led away by his political illusions and opinions to utter extravagant speeches, and

do absurd acts, was still in all other respects a most admirable man. Charlotte could not boast of either an extraordinary or impassioned courtship; but she had had enough of excitement. Morehouse would introduce her into the best society; her home would even be splendid; his fortune was more than on a par with her own; and, when he laid politics aside for the day or the hour, he was the most enchanting of men. Their honeymoon was a picture of their life. No great excitement in the domestic circle; no depression even for a moment. Fortune, ease, health, a large circle of friends, and great evenness of temper, were some amongst the advantages they enjoyed; and Mr. and Mrs. Morehouse are still generally regarded as examples to all who seek for models of quiet domestic felicity. Mr. Morehouse's public life has been agitated and anxious. It is so still, and will most probably continue so to the end of his days. He believes in human perfectibility; in the triumph of democracy; and in the government of the people by themselves; and although at every fresh stage of his life he experiences new disappointments, he goes on believing and hoping; always praying most fervently for the success of every revolution, whether in France, Spain, the Low Coun-

tries, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Turkey, Syria, or America. At the club he is a lion, at home he is a lamb; in the House of Commons he is a Radical, in his own house he is a quiet and inoffensive English gentleman.

As the autumn of 1830 commenced, public agitation and political excitement increased. The county of Kent became the theatre of serious disturbances, and these rapidly spread over the face of the whole country. The rioters did not at first assume the character of disorderly mobs, but appeared as lurking incendiaries, wreaking their vengeance on property. Night after night they lighted up conflagrations, by which an incredible quantity of grain, and even of live stock, was consumed; bands, still more daring, attacked machinery of all kinds, particularly threshing machines, the possession of which brought such a certain destruction of property on their owners, that after a short time insurance offices refused a policy to those who kept them on their premises. At length the evil spread so extensively, that all protection for property seemed at an end; bands of rioters pillaged and destroyed it in open day; and when night fell, simultaneous conflagrations, blazing up in different quarters, spread havoc and dismay far and wide over the land. At

length, the military force in the most disturbed districts was increased; a special commission proceeded into those counties where the outrages were committed; and, finally, aided by the yeomanry of the land, who mounted their horses and scoured the country, the government of the Duke succeeded in re-establishing material or physical order. But moral order was not so easily secured: the word REFORM passed from lip to lip; and the Parliament assembled on the 26th of October, under the most gloomy and even appalling circumstances. The Duke met the question of reform, when the subject was referred to by Lord Grey, by declaring, that "so long as he held a station in the government he should feel it his duty to resist any such measure." Henry Brougham gave notice of a distinct proposition for changing the representation of the country. Mr. Morehouse was in raptures.

"The glove is thrown down!" he exclaimed; "and, thank Heaven! we are at last to fight the battle with boroughmongers and slave-drivers."

Sir Edward still believed that the battle would *not* be fought; but, when the King deferred his visit to the Mansion House, "lest advantage should be taken of the nocturnal assemblage of multitudes to create tumult and

confusion;" when the public funds fell near three per cent.; when the entertainment at Guildhall was deferred; when, instead of civic festivities, the city was disturbed by the rolling of artillery and the passage of troops; when the Tower ditch was filled with water, and other precautions taken to put that fortress into a state of security; when extra guards were placed at the Bank and at the magazine in Hyde Park; and when large bodies of troops were billeted in the neighbourhood of the metropolis;—then, indeed, Sir Edward changed his mind; and he felt anxious to know whether he would be deemed to be, and be treated as an aristocrat in the approaching conflict. But when all these preparations were found to have been unnecessary, and when Morehouse exclaimed—

"The Duke did not dare to accompany the King to the city,"—then it was that Sir Edward felt that the days of the Wellington administration were numbered, and that a new order of events was about to begin.

"Huzza! huzza! Liberty for ever!" cried Morehouse, as he entered the drawing-room of Sir Edward, who was unable from temporary indisposition to attend the House on the division upon Sir Henry Parnell's motion to appoint a select committee to inquire into the

items composing the increased civil list of 970,000*l.* "Huzza! huzza! a majority of twenty-nine against the Duke! There is an end of his cabinet!"

Sir Edward was petrified. He regarded Morehouse in the light of a wizard. He had predicted the revolution at Paris, the cry for reform, and the overthrow of the Duke's cabinet. All had been fulfilled. Morehouse made new predictions.

"Earl Grey will be prime minister; and will introduce reform."

This appeared improbable. Earl Grey had said that he had no plan of reform to propose.

"And Brougham will be chancellor," continued Morehouse. That appeared to Sir Edward to be more improbable still, as he had declared that he "would have nothing to do with a Whig administration."

"They will all come to be kings in their turn," said Morehouse; "but their race will be short; and the aristocracy will be overthrown."

Sir Edward could endure this no longer: "Why, then, *we* shall be overthrown, my dear Morehouse; and I have no taste for that."

"Never fear," said Morehouse; "we do not belong to the aristocracy, but only to the upper classes."

The event which made the most impression on the mind of Sir Edward was, however, the defeat of Mr. Stanley, heir of the house of Derby, and representative of what was denominated moderate reform, by Henry Hunt, the leader of English democrats, and who was returned M.P. by the electors of Preston.

"What do you think of *this?*" asked Morehouse, with an air of triumph and heartfelt satisfaction; "does *this* look like the parliamentary system of *progressive* reform advocated by John Hill?"

Sir Edward was confounded: his Whiggism trembled.

"I believe you are right, Morehouse," replied the M.P. for Bribewell; "I really believe you are right. We must march with the people, and with coming events."

"He is ours," thought Morehouse; "a little while hence — a few facts more — and he is ours. Sir Edward is too good for the Whigs: he must belong to the Radicals."

On the 9th of December the session closed; and Sir Edward devoted the period which transpired between that day and the reassembling of the next session on the 3rd of February to many feasts and revellings, balls and rejoicings at Clapham Hall, over the whole of which So-

phia presided with amiability and dignity,—not forgetting; however, that she was soon to become Lady Montague. To all these parties Mrs. Catherwood and Maria were invited, and at all they danced, and were happy.

"What did Edward say to you this evening, my dear Maria?" asked Mrs. Catherwood, as they retired to their bed-room at Clapham Hall. "You blushed so deeply, that I quite pitied you."

"Oh! the silly fellow! he said, 'Why, Maria, you eclipse all in the room. When do you mean to stop getting more beautiful?'"

"And what did you reply, my dear Maria?"

"Oh! I said, 'Hold your tongue, Edward, and do not talk such nonsense.'"

"And what then?" rejoined Mrs. Catherwood.

"Why then he said, 'Upon my soul, Maria, it's true. You are the most bewitching of them all.' Then I laughed, and some one came and spoke to him, and that's the end of my story."

"He is a singular creature," said Mrs. Catherwood.

"And as excellent as he is singular," replied Maria. "I only mentioned in his hearing today the case of poor Mr. Stonehouse, so reduced

in his circumstances, and he gave me five pounds for the subscription in his favour."

"That was noble indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Catherwood.

"Well, good night, Maria; we shall see what we *shall* see, I suppose, some day or other. Good night!"

CHAPTER XII.

Her being's law is gentle bliss,
Her purpose and her duty;
And quiet joy her loveliness,
And soft delight her beauty.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

His years are young, but his experience old,
His head unmellow'd, but his judgment ripe.

* * * * *

He is complete in feature and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHILST Sir Edward and his friends were merry-making, Europe was convulsed from one end to the other by revolutions. Morehouse was in his glory. He had seen the mutilated houses and palaces of Paris; he had gazed with rapture on the work of demolition at Brussels; he had heard of the insurrections at Leipsic, Dresden, Hesse Cassel, Hamburgh, Berne, Basle, and, above all, at Warsaw, with inexpressible joy; and he anticipated further revo-

lutions in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, with the most ardent anxiety. He espoused the cause of France in Belgium, and desired most devoutly the union of the Belgian provinces with those of the former country. He was a violent enemy of the King of Holland, and proclaimed everywhere that the prediction of Napoleon was about to be accomplished,—that before a certain number of years "Europe would be republican or Cossack." Of course, Morehouse contended that she would be republican.

Whilst the members of Lord Grey's administration were occupied in framing the new parliamentary constitution, meetings were held in all parts of the country, for the purpose of getting up petitions to support government in its policy; and perhaps there never was a period when domestic and foreign affairs formed a stronger combination in favour of any public measure.

"Our debt alone would ruin us," said Morehouse, at one of the merry parties at Clapham Hall in the Christmas holidays; "but old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. Reform must follow the progress of intelligence, as light follows the rising of the sun! The old system is corrupt. All liberal and informed minds reject it. The weight of

taxation, the distress produced by agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial failures, and the actual misery of a starving population have, thank Heaven! together with the example of France, set the whole kingdom in a ferment; and now we shall beat the boroughmongers."

"But are not *we* boroughmongers ourselves?" asked Sir Edward, in all the simplicity of an honest and uncorrupted heart, "When we pay, as you and I both do, Morehouse,—you less than myself, I admit, but still you too to a certain extent,—the freemen, as they are called, of our boroughs to vote for us, do we not purchase their votes? What difference is there between the *crime* of purchasing twenty votes at 200*l.* each vote, and buying four hundred at 10*l.* each vote? For my part, I think the former plan less objectionable, since only twenty persons are corrupted instead of four hundred. And then what is the *moral* difference between paying one man 4000*l.* for a seat, or paying twenty persons 200*l.* each? I repeat, that I think it far preferable to pay one man 4000*l.* than twenty men 200*l.* each; and yet the amount is the same. For my part, I am sick of this buying and bribing system; and if the promised Reform Bill shall not put an end to it, it will effect nothing."

"You are wrong, Sir Edward," replied Morehouse. "I admit that it is a great moral evil to bribe at all; but with large constituencies bribery must be on a less vitiating and degrading scale than in small boroughs. If the promised Reform Bill shall only give to large constituencies, which now do not possess it, the right of voting, it will confer an immense good, — I may say an incalculable benefit."

Morehouse devoted much of his time to the manufacturing of petitions. "Petition! petition!" was his constant cry.

"For what?" asked Sir Edward.

"For reform," replied Morehouse.

"What reform?" asked Sir Edward.

"Never mind what reform," retorted the Radical member; "any reform—or some reform—reform is enough to say. We must stir up the very heart and bowels of the land for reform, without discussing the details till hereafter."

Political unions were also extensively formed for the purpose of organizing large numbers of individuals into one body, which might act on the public mind around them, and press their opinions on the government, in a spirit of dictation, but under the pretence of support.

Sir Edward stood aloof from these unions; but

Morehouse belonged in some way or other to them all.

"The snake is scotched, but it is not killed," said Morehouse; "and although we shall split from Lord Grey hereafter, for the moment at least we must support him."

In this state of affairs, Parliament met on the 3rd of February, when Earl Grey stated, that, although it had been a work of considerable difficulty, ministers had at last succeeded in framing a proposition which would be effective, without exceeding the bounds of a just and well-advised moderation. It had been unanimously sanctioned by government; and would be introduced into the House of Commons at as early a period as possible. On the 1st of March, Lord John, though not a cabinet minister, brought the measure before the House; and even Mr. Morehouse declared, "that it was far more liberal than he had anticipated."

Sir Edward became impregnated with the views and principles of his brother-in-law. Again he had seen all his predictions fulfilled. He had seen that Lord Grey was at the head of a reform cabinet; that Lord Brougham (in spite of his declaration that he would not accept office) was Lord Chancellor; that the country

was agitated to the centre; and now, finally, that a real and radical reform bill was brought forward by the government.

"There will be an increase of half a million in the constituency," said Morehouse; "for the increase in boroughs will be about 100,000; that in towns already represented, like Bribewell, about 110,000; in new boroughs, 50,000; in London, 95,000; in Scotland, 60,000; and in Ireland about 40,000. This is an instalment of five shillings in the pound. We must accept it with pleasure and gratitude;—but not as a final, only as a commencing, or first measure. We must never stop till we have universal suffrage, triennial parliaments, and vote by ballot! Ten years ago who would ever have dreamt of such a measure as this? Lord John himself would have laughed at it, as Utopian and absurd. Ten years hence we shall laugh at the present one, perhaps, and demand another instalment of five shillings. In the end we shall get paid."

"Still the Whigs have done well," replied Sir Edward; "and we are bound to support them."

"So long as they answer our end," said Morehouse, "and no longer. The Whigs are doing what they now do to secure office. They

could not hold place an hour on any other conditions. Still, for the moment, we must cry, 'Lord Grey for ever!'"

From the moment when the general outlines of the plan had been discussed in Parliament public excitement daily increased; and although few of those changes were proposed for which such men as Morehouse had been most clamorous, yet they altered their tone, and, as it were, simultaneously agreed to affect to receive it with joy. It did, indeed, give them less than they desired, but much more than they expected: the ballot, universal suffrage, and annual or triennial parliaments, were not to be mentioned; and the cry was adopted of,

"The Bill—the whole Bill—and nothing but the Bill!"

On the 21st of March the second reading was adopted by only a majority of *one*. There were 302 for the second reading that night, and 301 for its second reading that day six months.

"Vyvyan and the monopolists are defeated," said Morehouse to Sir Edward, as they left the House, after listening to the debate, and voting in favour of the Bill. "But one thing is clear to my mind. The Bill will be lost! A majo-

rity of *one* is no majority at all. The clauses of the Bill will be so altered in committee that the people will not accept the measure. We shall then have a dissolution — or a revolution."

"A dissolution!" exclaimed Sir Edward: "heavens and earth! you don't say so, Morehouse?"

"As certain as that we are now walking together," replied the Radical M.P.; "and that will not be the last one either. If the Bill shall not pass, there will be a revolution; and then, as a matter of course, there will be new parliaments altogether. If, on the contrary, it shall pass, there will be a dissolution to elect new members, under the provisions of the new Bill."

Sir Edward expressed his hopes "that these varied dissolutions would not necessitate the same amount of expenditure at each election, for that he should not be disposed to draw so largely on his fortune for the honour of being one of those who eventually passed the Reform Bill."

Morehouse reminded him, that when once the Bill should have passed, and a House elected under the provisions of the new scheme, he might be member for many years.

This somewhat consoled him; but as Bribewell was one of the places whose electors were to be greatly increased in number in order to diminish the corruption and bribery which were so well known to exist there, he asked Morehouse his opinion as to the best plan for him to adopt in the event of a dissolution.

"Declare yourself frankly for the people," replied the Radical member; "become one of us; hoist the standard of popular rights and liberties; and try your luck at some place where you will have a chance of being returned by a constituency not affected by the proposed Reform Bill."

Sir Edward thought this good advice, and resolved to direct his solicitors to look out for him for such a constituency.

On the 18th of April, 1831, one of the Tory members for Liverpool proposed an amendment for the diminution of the number of representatives; and ministers were left next night in a minority of eight.

"A dissolution is inevitable," said Morehouse.

"Marchton has just told me ministers will resign," replied Sir Edward.

"Not such fools!" said Morehouse. "If they resigned at this moment, there would be

a revolution; and they would be the first to suffer."

The predictions of Morehouse were again correct. The King went down unexpectedly to the House of Lords, and, in the midst of one of the most extraordinary scenes that ever occurred in that place, prorogued Parliament to the 10th of May. Next day it was dissolved, and a new Parliament appointed to meet on the 14th of June. The whole nation was by this step thrown into a state of unparalleled agitation and excitement. In many places the dissolution was celebrated by illuminations; and in London, the unrestrained rabble vented their rage on the houses of individuals who had expressed sentiments unfavourable to the Bill. The Duke and Mr. Baring were two of the first victims; but the aristocracy would not yield yet; and gold became as plentiful as dirt, to secure the return of a majority of the opposers of the Reform Bill to the new Parliament. But it was too late: General Gascoyne was thrown out for Liverpool, Sir R. Vyvyan for Cornwall, and Mr. Bankes for Dorsetshire.

The outvoters of Bribewell applied to Sir Edward Clapperton once more to represent them in Parliament. They engaged to return

him for 2500*l.*; but he declined the honour. He knew well that Lord Reckless and Colonel Marchton were backed by the Carlton, as well as by their own long purses, and he refused to spend his money in a hopeless contest.

Lord Montague conversed with Sir Edward as to the best course to take. His lordship, when plain Sir Felix, was Conservative; he had become, as Lord Montague, Whig. His mind, like those of many others, had been much biassed by passing events. His cry was that of the supporters of the government, "The Bill — the whole Bill — and nothing but the Bill!" He counselled Sir Edward to put up for some place where one Whig member had always been returned; and where, in consequence of the existing state of the public feeling, a second might be elected. Of course the place must be one of those wholly unaffected by the provisions or schedules of the proposed Reform Bill.

Sir Edward soon espied an opening. The town of *Doubtful* united all the qualifications which Lord Montague and Mr. Morehouse had pointed out. The constituency was large, but divided. It was customary to spend a great deal of money in treating, but none or little in bribery. It was some distance from

London, and situate towards the north. A deputation had proceeded to the metropolis to ask Mr. Morehouse to become a Radical candidate, and assured him that his success was not doubtful. Mr. Morehouse, however, was engaged elsewhere; and as he felt quite certain of being re-elected by the constituents he had represented in four parliaments, he had no desire to change.

"I thank you much for your visit, for your preference, for your kindness, gentlemen," replied Mr. Morehouse to the deputation; "but I am already engaged. My brother-in-law, Sir Edward Clapperton, would, however, suit you. You will find his vote in favour of the Reform Bill. He is young and rich, amiable, and a very fair speaker. I think you might induce him to become your candidate."

The deputation thanked him for his suggestion, requested a letter of introduction, and proceeded to Clapham Hall. They found Sir Edward in a hesitating and doubtful mood; but as the marriage of Sophia with Lord Montague was fixed to take place on the 10th of June, and as the Clapperton family all felt that it would be most desirable that Sir Edward should be an M.P. when that event should be celebrated, he finally consented to become the

Whig-Radical candidate for *Doubtful.* Sophia, who had never witnessed an election, expressed her desire to accompany her brother, or rather to make a journey with Captain Macfarlane and his wife, herself paying the whole expenses. Sir Edward could have no objection. The captain would be useful. Sir Edward likewise resolved again to entreat his friend Mr. Hill to join them; again asked George Catherwood to be another of his companions, and Colonel Dawson to take the place of Lord Montague, who felt that a peer of the realm could not with propriety interfere in any contested election.

"Let us make a merry party," said Sophia; "and ask Mrs. Catherwood and Maria."

"I have no objection," replied Sir Edward; and as the weather was lovely, there was little doubt that Mrs. Catherwood would join them.

Sophia went to London, accompanied by her brother; and together they called on the Catherwoods.

Mrs. Catherwood hesitated; Maria looked grave; and her mother perceived it.

"What say you, Maria?" asked Mrs. Catherwood, doubtful as to what her grave looks meant.

"I should enjoy it above all things," she replied, "provided Edward should be elected; but

these are troublesome times just now; and if he were to be thrown out, I should not be quite happy."

"Oh, there is no fear of losing," said Sir Edward; "though I am gratified by your kind sympathy, Maria, and you would be sure to bring me good luck by your presence."

After a few more doubts and difficulties, the party was arranged.

The day arrived for starting. *Doubtful* was two days' distance from town. In one carriage were, Sir Edward, Mrs. Catherwood, Maria Mr. Hill, and Colonel Dawson; in the other, Captain and Mrs. Macfarlane, Sophia, and George Catherwood. It was arranged, that on their arriving within twelve miles of *Doubtful* the ladies should proceed by a different and rather circuitous road, in one carriage, and enter quietly at night into the apartments at the hotel previously bespoke for them; whilst Sir Edward and his friends should follow the directions of his electioneering committee.

Mrs. Catherwood, though she consented to proceed to *Doubtful*, accompanied by Maria, with the Clappertons and Macfarlanes, did so rather against her conscience. She was a Whig, not a Radical. She had watched Sir Edward through his quick changes from Tory, Whig, and Radical; for she knew something of the

constituency of *Doubtful*, having been born within twelve miles of that town, and she was certain that none but a Radical, or at least Whig-Radical member, had any chance of success at this particular period of excitement and popular feeling. If Mrs. Catherwood had not known and loved Sir Edward for his many cardinal virtues, she would have reprobated his political tergiversation; and she feared that her presence would, in his opinion, appear to indicate that she approved his conduct. Since, however, she had made the promise, and as Maria was most anxious to witness a contested election, Sir Edward having no doubt as to his success, the arrangements for departure were made, and a large stock of true-blue riband placed in their travelling boxes.

The journey was a merry one. The fellow-travellers changed about from carriage to carriage nearly at every fresh stage; and when at the end of forty-eight hours they reached the halting-place, they were scarcely fatigued with their travels. During the afternoon of the second day Maria had made a discovery in the road-book. She had read, that within three miles of *Doubtful* the late Lord Dowling had a country seat, with a small park, and she remembered that Lady Charlotte had spoken

to her of it with pleasure, as a spot in which she had passed many happy days in former years of her life, but which her father had not visited since his attacks of gout had rendered a warmer climate essential to his recovery. More than a month had elapsed since the Clappertons had heard of Lady Charlotte; but this revival of her name by Maria led to many eulogiums on the part of Sophia, Mrs. Catherwood, and Sir Edward.

On reaching the town of B—— Sir Edward found a deputation from *Doubtful* waiting to receive him. They informed him, that there were five candidates, including himself; but that two of the five had not the most remote chance of success. *Sir Matthew Twistle* and the Honourable *Captain Fernbrook* were two Tory candidates. They had property in the neighbourhood, and some influence with the magistracy in the town. They had spent much money of late, and had the farmers and farming-men in the environs in their favour. But they were not the voters. "Out of twelve hundred voters," said the deputation, "they will not have more than two hundred each; and these will be the same individuals: those who vote for one will vote also for the other."

The three candidates who had good chances

of success were, Sir Edward Clapperton, Lord Norwich, a well known Whig, who during thirty years had voted for reform, and Mr. Warder, who was a Radical, a popular speaker, and who had gained the hearts of the lower orders by his plain and simple oratory.

"So that the real battle will be between myself and Mr. Warder?" said Sir Edward.

"Exactly so," replied the chairman of his committee. "If we could effect a coalition with Lord Norwich, your election would be certain; but otherwise, it will be uncertain to the last."

"How many do you expect will poll out of twelve hundred?" asked Sir Edward.

"Certainly eleven hundred and fifty," replied the chairman.

"And how many ought we to have on our side to render the election certain?"

"That will depend upon whether those who vote for Lord Norwich will split their votes in your favour, or in favour of Mr. Warder."

"Then, might we not make common cause with Mr. Warder?" asked Sir Edward.

"If we did this we should lose many moderate men," replied the chairman. "To coalesce with Lord Norwich would be a master-stroke; but a coalition with Warder would not help us.

Besides which, Mr. Warder goes farther than your committee, for he proclaims the necessity for triennial parliaments, the ballot, and nearly, if not quite, universal suffrage."

"I would vote for the two former," replied Sir Edward; "but not for the latter."

"That is our way of thinking," said the chairman; "but Lord Norwich is in favour of short parliaments, but against the ballot and universal suffrage."

"I fear, then, we must each stand on our own merits," observed Sir Edward, "unless we can effect a coalition with Lord Norwich. But, how happens it that the Tory candidates should in your opinion have such few chances of success, when for many years *Doubtful* has returned one Whig and one Tory, or Tory-Whig member?"

"The state of public opinion in *Doubtful* has changed most extraordinarily within the last fortnight," replied the chairman. "It is hardly credible. The adoption of the clause or amendment of General Gascoyne has so enraged the moderate men in the place, who fear that the final rejection of the Reform Bill would lead to a revolution, that they think they are acting a Conservative part in returning Whig members. This is the whole secret."

Sophia Clapperton, Mrs. Catherwood Maria, and Mrs. Macfarlane, proceeded the same night to *Doubtful.* They found it all life and animation. Sir Matthew Twistle and the Honourable Captain Fernbrook had concluded a canvass by no means successful. They had avowed their disappointment — but still determined to take the sense of the electors. Their addresses were manly and temperate, indulging in no invectives, and promising to consider every measure which should be submitted to Parliament by the government with impartiality and attention.

The next day Sir Edward made his entry. He was well received; but he was the last in the field: even Mr. Warder was before him. Still his canvass was successful, and he had three hundred and forty distinct promises. Most of these promises were made by those electors who had resolved not to vote for the Tories, and who intended to give *one* of their votes to Lord Norwich. The ladies were of course enchanted at the procession of Sir Edward into the town, and when Maria heard the cries of "Clapperton for ever!" she felt that his election was *sure.*

"How delightful it will be to see him chaired," said Maria.

"It will indeed," replied Lucy, who, though married and steady, was quite as cheerful as when she applauded Captain Macfarlane in Milsom Street.

The next day, whilst the ladies were breakfasting alone, who should enter the room, without any form, ceremony, or even introduction, but Lady Charlotte Dowling?

The burst of joy, pleasure, and surprise, with which she was greeted, must have convinced her, if she had not known it before, that she was indeed a special favourite.

"Well, I hope Sir Edward will be successful," said Lady Charlotte, in her own charming manner; "I should be very sorry were he defeated."

"Oh, he is sure to be elected," replied Maria; "mamma and I would not have come without."

The *naïveté* of this speech caused a general laugh, and at this moment Sir Edward entered.

Lady Charlotte blushed and looked confused. She had come to call on the ladies, and not on Sir Edward. She had been inhabiting, during the previous fortnight, the house of her girlish recollections, and Mr. and Mrs. Maitland, two of her Bath friends, had accompanied her thither.

She had only learned the preceding day that Sir Edward was accompanied by ladies, and had been informed by the wife of the hotel-keeper the hour at which they breakfasted: and that the ladies breakfasted alone.

"I am charmed to see you, indeed, Lady Charlotte," said Sir Edward as he entered the room, and his look of pleasure confirmed the truth of his declaration.

"I hope you will be at the head of the poll," said Lady Charlotte; "but they are a sad treacherous and uncertain set here."

"It will be a near run, I fear," replied Sir Edward; "though I cannot be sufficiently grateful for your kind wishes."

Sir Edward chatted for a quarter of an hour with Lady Charlotte, and then took leave of her, as he had to learn the result of a conference which had taken place between the joint committees of himself and Lord Norwich, to examine the possibility of a coalition.

Sir Edward learned with regret that a formal coalition was disapproved of; but that both the committees would encourage their voters as much as possible to vote for the other candidate. The fact was, Lord Norwich had been apprized that Sir Edward had been a Tory candidate at Warnstable, and he feared that if the circum-

stance transpired, his connexion with Sir Edward might be prejudicial to his return.

At length the day of nomination arrived. The Tory candidates were received with deafening yells and hisses; and as, on the show of hands, it was evident that they had no chance of being elected, they withdrew.

The hands held up in favour of Lord Norwich, Sir Edward Clapperton, and Mr. Warder, were so nearly equal that the mayor required *three* trials to be made before he could decide who had the majority. On the third trial he proclaimed that the choice had fallen on Lord Norwich and Sir Edward Clapperton.

The friends of Mr. Warder were dissatisfied with the decision, and demanded a poll. Some of the Conservative electors, disappointed by the withdrawal of their own candidates, refused to vote, whilst others resolved on supporting Lord Norwich and Sir Edward Clapperton, in preference to Mr. Warder, on the principle "that of two evils you should choose the least."

The first day's polling gave for

Lord Norwich.	Sir Edward Clapperton.	Mr. Warder.
430.	430.	380.

It was known during the day that the votes for Mr. Warder were nearly all plumpers. A few, indeed, had voted for him and Lord Nor-

wich, which was the reason why Sir Edward had fifty less on the poll than his lordship. The motive which led to the adoption of this system of plumpers was, that the electors who were most democratic were resolved, if possible, *coûte qui coûte* on carrying a Radical candidate, and defeating a Whig coalition.

Sir Edward was fifty a head, and as not one plumper was recorded for him, nor one vote split between him and Warder, nor one plumper given to Lord Norwich, exactly eight hundred and ten voters had polled the first day. This was prodigious !

The second day, about one o'clock, three immense posting-bills were brought in front of the hustings, each posting-bill being pasted on a large board, and carried by a man.

On each bill was a large picture of a BLACK RAT, and beneath it the speech of Sir Edward made at Warnstable, in which he had declared that he was "A TORY."

At the moment these posting-bills made their appearance the numbers were,—

Lord Norwich.	Sir Edward Clapperton.	Mr. Warder.
501.	460.	415.

"What is that?" asked Mr. Hill of Sir Edward.

"It is a picture of a *Rat*," he replied, "and my speech at Warnstable printed beneath it."

"We have lost the election then," said Mr. Hill. "This is a true Radical trick; but it will trick you out of the seat, rely on that!"

At the same moment that these posting-bills appeared in front of the hustings copies were being stuck all over the walls. All the town rushed to the market-place to witness the effect it would produce.

"You must explain your conduct, Sir Edward," cried one of his committee, who was confounded. "Is this a faithful copy of your speech?"

"It is," replied Sir Edward. "I was a Tory then — and I declared it. I am a Reformer now — and I proclaim it. Am I the only one who has seen abundant reasons for changing his opinions during the events of the last twelve months?"

"You are a Rat!" cried the Radical party, now mustered in great force before the polling-booth.

"Rat — Rat — Rat!" shouted the mob; and from that time every vote was a plumper for Warder. The election closed the second day, for there were no more to vote; and Sir Edward consented to its termination. The numbers were,

Mr. Warder.	Lord Norwich.	Sir Edward Clapperton.
605.	508.	450.

Mr. Warder addressed the electors. He congratulated the town of *Doubtful* on the victory it had gained. It had defeated the Tory boroughmongers, and a "sham patriot!"

Sir Edward rose, and desired Mr. Warder to repeat his words, if he dared.

A scene of indescribable confusion then ensued. In vain did Lord Norwich and Sir Edward seek to be heard; and after two hours of vituperation, passion, and fury, the mob dispersed.

Sir Edward returned soon afterwards to the hotel. Mrs. Catherwood and Maria were alone in the great dining-room.

Sir Edward looked cheerful and gay; presenting a strange contrast to Mrs. Catherwood and Maria. The former began to condole with him; and Maria could not hide her tears.

"I have done with them all, my dear Maria," said Sir Edward; "Tories, Whigs, Radicals, they are *all* alike. Public life is not suited to me. I shall henceforth seek in the charms of domestic society the happiness, ease, quietness, and respect, which cannot be found in the circles, parties, and factions which divide this country."

"That 's quite right, Edward," said Maria; "I applaud your decision."

"But I cannot be happy alone, Maria; and

there is only one being I have ever seen who can share my happiness with me.

"Lady Charlotte Dowling," said Maria.

"Yourself, dearest and best of creatures," replied Sir Edward, who gazed with ineffable delight at the beautiful Maria, whose cheeks were still bedewed with tears.

"My dear Mrs. Catherwood," continued Sir Edward, turning to his beloved friend, "what say you to myself for your son-in-law?"

"You have been as dear to me as my son all your life, Edward," she replied; "but I have little influence in these matters. Maria is to decide, not her mother."

"Dearest Maria, do you love me, though I am 'a Rat,' a Tory, a Whig, and a Radical?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Edward," said Maria. "I hate the people who called you so! I could have burnt them for it!"

Sophia soon after entered the room. She expected to see her brother dejected, but on the contrary he was more than usually gay! What could have happened?"

"I am going to be married, Sophia," said Sir Edward. "I am quite sick of public life. I have done with it for ever."

"To whom, then, dear Edward?" asked Sophia, "if it is a fair question."

"To one whom I have loved from my boy-

hood," replied Sir Edward; and Sophia rushed forward to Maria and threw herself on her neck.

Sophia would have preferred Lady Charlotte Dowling; but her brother's happiness was her first desire, and Maria she loved as a sister.

The news soon spread. Captain Macfarlane and his lady were delighted beyond measure; and dear Lady Charlotte Dowling consented to become one of the bridesmaids.

That day three weeks Lord Montague and Sophia, and Sir Edward Clapperton and Maria, were married by the Bishop of London; and Sir Edward is now the father of five beautiful children, all brought up and educated with unexampled care by their clever and affectionate mother, who is the happiest of the happy, and who sometimes reminds Sir Edward of the polling-booth at *Doubtful*, and of his resolution "to have done for ever with Tories, Whigs, and Radicals."

THE END.

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